

## Albright holds off on Mideast trip

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will not meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and has no plans to travel to the Middle East as previously planned, the State Department said Monday. Sharon will meet in New York Friday with Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross but the State Department denied the lower-level U.S. representation was a sub intended to highlight U.S. frustration with Israel's decision to freeze the Wye River peace deal. "The suggestion that there's some problem between us and the Israeli foreign ministry is simply incorrect," said State Department spokesman James Rubin. He said Sharon had offered to meet with either Ross or Albright to discuss the Mideast peace process. Albright had been scheduled to travel to Israel this month to take stock of progress in implementing the Wye River land-for-security deal.

Volume 24 Number 7036

AMMAN TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1999, RAMADAN 18, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

## Hizbullah Katyushas slam border area

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — The Lebanese occupation resistance group Hizbullah Monday fired three Katyusha rockets at an Israeli position near the Lebanon-Israeli international border, security sources said. The Katyushas, which caused no casualties, fell near two Israeli tanks driving out of the border post of Qibya, which overlooks the village of Houla in the Israeli-occupied buffer zone of southern Lebanon, they said. The Islamic Resistance, Hizbullah's military wing, claimed the attack.

## Peace fund finds \$60m for Palestinians

TEL AVIV (Reuters) — A fund conceived by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the head of the World Bank has raised \$60 million for investment in Palestinian businesses in the West Bank and Gaza. Peres said on Monday, The Peace Technology Fund, which will make its first investments in 1999, seeks to support the growth of the Palestinian private sector and joint ventures with Israeli and international businesses.

## Assad due to be reelected next month

BEIRUT (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad is expected to be reelected president for a fourth term since 1970 in a popular referendum to be held next month, the Lebanese newspaper Al Nahar reported Monday. "A referendum for the reelection of Assad will most probably take place Feb. 8 after a commission presided by Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam takes the necessary measures," the newspaper said. "A popular [electoral] campaign will precede the referendum," the daily added. Assad, 69, has been in power since 1970 and has completed four seven-year terms.

## U.S. embassy in Syria reopens

DAMASCUS (R) — The American embassy in Damascus on Monday announced a partial resumption of consular services 16 days after being damaged by demonstrators protesting against the U.S.-led air strikes on Iraq. The embassy said in a statement that the mission would resume some immigrant visa and other services on Tuesday but that visas for visitors, students and businesspeople would not be issued until further notice.

## Yemen will not join Commonwealth

SANA (R) — Yemen said on Monday it was abandoning a bid to join the Commonwealth group of nations following a diplomatic row with Britain over the killing of four Western hostages in the Arabian state. A Yemeni foreign ministry statement said comments attributed to a British government official that Yemen's bid to join the Commonwealth would not succeed "stem from lack of keenness for clear relations between the two governments."

## UAE's population grows to 2.776 m

ABU DHABI (R) — The population of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) swelled to some 2.776 million in 1998 compared to 2.624 million the previous year, figures released by the planning ministry on Monday showed. The proportion of the population in work also rose in the same period, with the workforce growing to 1.378 million in 1998 against 1.330 million in 1997.

## Two Israeli women injured in Hebron attack

HEBROW (AFP) — Two Israeli women were wounded Monday when Palestinians riddled their vehicle with automatic rifle fire in the divided city of Hebron — the first political violence in the West Bank of the year.

One of the women was hospitalised with serious wounds and the other was in moderate condition, police said. A third woman was slightly cut by shattered glass.

All three women were from the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba located outside Hebron.

Their GMC utility vehicle was hit by at least 21 bullets in the attack near Al Ibrahim mosque, a shrine sacred to both Muslims and Jews in an Israeli-controlled sector of Hebron.

Israel Radio said the gunmen apparently fired from the roof of a building in the Palestinian-ruled part of the city of 140,000 and Israeli leaders called on the Palestin-

(Continued on page 12)

## Israel officially heads into long election campaign

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's parliament voted overwhelmingly Monday to hold early national elections on May 17, formally launching what is expected to be a long and bruising electoral campaign likely to leave the beleaguered peace process in limbo. In suc-

cessive second and third readings of the early-elections bill, deputies voted 85 to 27 to dissolve the legislature and move the polls up from their scheduled date in the year 2000 to May 17.

Under Israeli election rules, two votes will be held in parallel — an election by proportional representation for the 120-member parliament, or Knesset, and a straight majority vote for the prime minister. If no candidate for prime

Nanyahu faces possible challenge  
(Continued on page 12)

(Continued on page 12)



An Israeli plain-clothed security officer questions a Palestinian boy in the West Bank town of Hebron after suspected Palestinian militants fired on a van carrying Israeli settlers as it passed through the divided city, injuring two women passengers on Monday (AP photo)

## U.S.: Iraqi aircraft probe no-fly zones

Agencies

IRAQI AIRCRAFT probed the edges of the U.S.-enforced no-fly zones over Iraq during the past several days without drawing retaliatory attacks by U.S. warplanes, a Pentagon official said Monday.

The incursions were the latest in a series of Iraqi challenges to the no-fly zones in the wake of last month's four-day

"Desert Fox" air campaign by U.S. and British forces.

"There have been instances

in the past several days of Iraqi aircraft attempting to fly on the edge of the no-fly zone and even entering the no-fly zone for brief periods," said the Pentagon official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official declined to say where Iraqi aircraft crossed into the no-fly zones.

Iraqi leadership holds military talks (page 12)

(Continued on page 12)

## U.S. cautious on euro, sees no threat to dollar

WASHINGTON (R) — The

United States reserved judgment on Europe's new currency on Monday as it shrugged off fears the euro could pose a challenge to the U.S. dollar's status as the world's top reserve currency.

Instead, top U.S. officials reiterated their longstanding mantra that what is good for Europe will be good for the United States, adding only that the euro's long-awaited launch underscored the need for sound economic policies at home.

"It will be a currency like all other currencies," U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin told reporters after a speech at the National Press Club.

Washington's low-key approach to the euro reflects U.S. concerns that Europe might turn its back on problems elsewhere in the world economy as it concentrates on making its historic currency union work.

At the same time, U.S. officials have must not deflect from structural reforms to reduce sky-high unemployment rates in much of Europe.

On U.S. foreign exchange markets, the euro slipped against the dollar on the first day of official trading after the currency produced a strong performance against the greenback in European and Asian trading overnight.

Rubin, asked about the euro's strong debut, stuck to his routine of not commenting on day-to-day market movements and said it was normal for markets to fluctuate at home.

"That is not where our focus needs to be. Our focus needs to be on keeping our house in order. If our house is in order then we'll be in fine shape," he said.

Washington's low-key approach to the euro reflects its focus on our own policies and continuing to make the United States a place where people want to invest their capital by having sound policies here — particularly by maintaining our fiscal discipline," Rubin said.

And Summers, appearing on CNBC television earlier on Monday, added: "As far as the dollar is concerned, the buck stops here. As long

## Commission bows to Bank of England on euro terminology

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Its official: whenever more than one Euro are gathered together they shall be known as "euros" — and its all thanks to the Bank of England. The European Commission confirmed on Monday that it had decided to ignore the official documents authorising the launch of the new currency, in which the English plural of one euro is written without any "s" at the end. All press releases and official documents from the EU executive will refer to one euro, but two, ten or one hundred euros, chief spokeswoman Martine Richert confirmed.

"In the official text adopted by the council of ministers there is no s, but we saw that the Bank of England had adopted this usage so we decided to follow," she said. The plural of euro is either written or pronounced with an s in 10 of the 11 official EU languages, the exception being German, which keeps the word the same for both the singular and the plural. Appropriately — some might say — for a currency that has been created largely on Germany's terms, it is the German usage that will be reflected on the standardised euro notes when they are introduced in 2002.

as we keep our fundamentals strong. I think the dollar (and) U.S. borrowing costs will do just fine."

The 11 nations that adopted the euro have about the same economic output and share of world trade as the United States.

That weight has prompted some analysts to speculate

## Kuwaiti deputy premier arrives today on ground-breaking visit

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — A Kuwaiti minister is due in Amman on Tuesday for a ground-breaking visit expected to help bury a legacy of strained ties that resulted from the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, officials said.

The visit of Kuwait's deputy prime minister and minister of state for cabinet affairs, Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil, comes two days after Kuwait sent an invitation to Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib to visit the emirate.

Dakhil is expected to deliver a message to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on bilateral ties and regional developments, the Jordanian officials added.

Khatib told the Jordan Times on Monday he had accepted the invitation to go to Kuwait. However, he said, no date has been set yet.

"I have sent a reply message to Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah on

Sunday expressing appreciation for his noble feelings and congratulating on the recovery of His Majesty King Hussein, and also thanked him for the invitation to visit Kuwait, which I hope to make soon," Khatib added.

Informed sources told the Jordan Times that Kuwait sent two official messages to Jordan within one week.

"Jordan received two warm messages from Kuwait during the last week," one source said. "The first message came after Prince Hassan's call in the opening address before the emergency session of the Arab Parliamentary Union that was held in Amman on Dec. 27, for the release of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war (PoWs) held

in Iraq."

"A few days later, Sheikh Sabah sent another message to his Jordanian counterpart inviting him to visit Kuwait and also offering congratulations on the King's full recovery, wishing him a safe return

home," he added.

A senior official described the Kuwaiti invitation as crowning an end to the eight-year strain in ties between the two countries.

"We hope our contacts will further boost ties and return them to pre-crisis levels of warmth," a senior official said.

Arab diplomats said they expected Dakhil to extend his government's appreciation for Amman's stance during the four-day campaign of U.S.-led air strikes on Iraq last month.

The trip will be the first by a top-level Kuwaiti minister since the Gulf crisis soured bilateral ties because of Amman's perceived tilt towards Iraq, which occupied Kuwait for seven months in August 1990.

Jordan condemned the invasion, but, unlike other Arab countries, it refused to join the U.S.-led military alliance that later liberated Kuwait.

(Continued on page 12)

## Prospects for holding Arab summit slim, official says

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — The prospects of holding an Arab summit to discuss the U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq the Iraqi situation are slim, a senior official said yesterday.

"It might be possible to hold an Arab ministerial meeting on Jan. 24 to discuss the U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq over arms inspections," the official who did not wish to be named, told the Jordan Times. "But differences may prevent the ministers from reaching a decision on the holding of an Arab summit," he added.

The White House said Monday the United States would continue to enforce the no-fly zones. "The president has made clear that he plans to enforce the no-fly zones," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said. "It is an important part of our containment policy limiting the Pentagon's ability to threaten his neighbours and repress his own people," Lockhart added.

The meeting was postponed from Dec. 30 after a secret visit by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal to Cairo last week.

The meeting was

postponed from Dec. 30 after a secret visit by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal to Cairo last week.

Arab foreign ministers are due to meet at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on Jan. 24 upon Yemen's request.

The meeting was

postponed from Dec. 30 after a secret visit by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal to Cairo last week.

The foreign ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Syria met in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Hurghada on Saturday to discuss the ministerial meeting.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said the talks were aimed at "coming up with a general agreement on what the foreign ministers meeting can produce."

Another meeting between Jordanian, Egyptian and Palestinian officials is also expected soon to coordinate positions.

"As part of our ongoing coordination and consultations, three ministers from the three countries are expected to meet after Eid Al Fitr," a senior official said.

"The meeting is vital to clarify in advance what are we going to achieve in the summit," he added.

If the Arab League ministers agree on holding the summit, it will be the first since the Arab leaders met in Cairo in 1996 to discuss the peace process.

Iraq has attacked Abdul Meguid, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and other Arab leaders, accusing them of postponing the ministers meeting to contain Arab anger against the air strikes.



A man on stilts in euro colours lifts the beret of a passer-by in the '24 hours of the euro' parade on Monday in Paris to celebrate the birth of Europe's common currency (AFP photo)

## Cult member protests innocence; Israel issues deportation orders

PETAH TIKVAH (AP) — Hunched over on a bench in an Israeli magistrate's court Monday, a member of the Denver-based doomsday cult said he never planned to harm anyone.

However, Israeli police believe the suspect and others in the Concerned Christians group hatched a plot to commit acts of violence near Jerusalem holy sites in hopes of triggering a bloody Armageddon that would bring about the return of Christ.

"I am not here to hurt anybody," the suspect, identified in court documents as John Bayles, said in a soft voice.

Bayles, of Denver, and two other men — identified by their lawyer as Terry Smith, 42, of Eagle, Colorado, and Eric Malesic, 36, of Westminster, a Denver suburb — appeared before the court Monday.

All three denied the allegations and were ordered held another 48 hours until police complete their investigation.

Another 11 people alleged to belong to the cult — including six children — were ordered deported and have three days to appeal.

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Suissa suggested that the suspects had planned to commit suicide and not intended to harm anyone else.

"We don't want such people here, nor that we are against tourists coming. But they shouldn't do things we don't want them to do," Suissa said on Israel army radio.

The 14 were detained Sunday in raids on two homes in the Jerusalem suburbs of Moza and Mevasseret Zion.

Officials said the three men in detention would be ordered deported pending completion

of an investigation into suspicions that they planned to harm holy places in Israel.

"That is totally denied," Smith, wearing a green windbreaker and Reebok striped of their laces, said when told of the police suspicions.

When Judge Nira Diskin asked Malesic if he would accept public defender Eran Avital as his lawyer, the bearded American calmly eyed Avital for a moment, then pronounced: "That's fine."

Avital, who is representing all three men, said he believed the charges would be dismissed by the next court appearance in 48 hours, although he did not see much of the evidence.

"It's all classified," he said.

Israeli officials fear that the Concerned Christians may only be a forerunner and that scores of other religious extremists will be drawn to pre-millennial Jerusalem to live out apocalyptic fantasies, including mass suicide.

Some 4.5 million tourists, including many Christian pilgrims, are expected to visit the Holy Land this year, double the usual number.

The Denver cultists were arrested by a newly formed Israeli task force consisting of police, agents of the domestic Shin Bet security service and the Mossad spy agency.

Members of the Concerned Christians, a cult which counts only several dozen members, began selling their homes in and around Denver this fall.

Their leader, Monte Kim Miller, believes he will die on the streets of Jerusalem in December and be resurrected. Miller was not among those detained, and police said he was not in Israel.



Holding a coat over his head, John Bayles of Denver, a member of the Denver-based doomsday cult The Concerned Christians, is led by Israeli police detectives to a hearing at Petah Tikvah's magistrate's court Monday. Israel on Monday ordered 11 members of the cult deported and brought two others before a magistrate on suspicion that they plotted a Jerusalem shootout with police in hopes it would bring Jesus Christ's return (AP photo).

Roggeman, who has been following the case on his own time, recognised another of the alleged cult members arrested in the suburb of Moza from a newspaper photo.

He identified a woman holding a baby as she gets into a police vehicle as Annie Biondo Malesic and told The Associated Press that her mother had identified her as well. Her relationship to Eric Malesic was not clear.

A licence plate on a Yamaha off-road motorcycle left on the lawn in front of the house in

Moza was registered to Gary and Cheryl Schmidt of Yelbowjacket, about 400 kilometers southwest of Denver.

Neighbours, who knew the couple who lived in the house as Gary and Cheryl, said they had disappeared about a month ago.

First Sgt. Ilan Granot told the court there was concern Bayles might harm himself and that he was being watched closely.

"I don't feel I pose a threat to anybody," Bayles said.

## Iraq declares ceasefire in verbal war with Egypt

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's influential Babel newspaper on Monday said it had declared a ceasefire in its vitriolic war of words with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The daily, run by eldest son of the Iraqi president Uday Saddam Hussein, said the move was designed to avoid the campaign's "exploitation by the American and Zionist enemies."

"Babel and the non-governmental weeklies believe President Mubarak has received the message and has decided to end its campaign from Tuesday," the newspaper told its readers.

The campaign followed remarks by Mubarak that he blamed Saddam Hussein for his people's continuing plight. His reproach was the latest in

a series of bitter Egyptian attacks on Iraq.

"Our American and Zionist enemies have begun to exploit this press campaign to widen the gap between the Iraqi and Egyptian people," Babel said.

Calling on Mubarak to "learn history's lessons."

But prior to the ceasefire, Iraq's press launched its fourth day of vitriolic attacks Monday on Mubarak, accusing him of delaying a Arab summit at which Baghdad hoped to win strong backing.

The ceasefire came as a newspaper with close links to Qatar's foreign ministry on Monday urged Iraq and Egypt to end their conflict saying it "only serves the enemies of the Arab nation."

"The Iraqis are suffering to survive, to have milk and medicine. They are distanced

from this war of words, as are the Egyptian people who demonstrated in the street their support for the Iraqis," Al-Watan said.

There were large demonstrations in Egypt in support of Baghdad during the four-day U.S. and British bombings of Iraq that ended December 20.

At his first cabinet meeting of the new year, Saddam lashed out at unnamed Arab nations that were "traitors participating in the plot of aggression against Iraq," Iraq's official INA news agency said Sunday.

Ties between Egypt and Iraq were broken during the 1991 Gulf War by Baghdad. But 1998 saw a thaw which included a visit by Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Azziz to Cairo.

The Iraqis are suffering to survive, to have milk and medicine. They are distanced

## Car set on fire at Arabic newspaper

NEW YORK (AP) — A manager at a prominent Arabic newspaper says the business received harassing telephone calls before a car was driven inside the paper's printing facility and set afire.

The message, in Arabic, "was someone cursing, but there were no specifics, no nothing," said Yazid Mourani, president of Media Marketing Research.

Police said a 1992 Mitsubishi was driven through a steel gate at the Al Hayat facility in Queens on Friday afternoon and set on fire. It caused minor damage to the building, where newspapers are printed for New York City, but there were no injuries and no arrests.

In January 1997, letter bombs were sent to offices for the newspaper in Washington, in London and at the

United Nations. Two people were injured when the bomb sent to the London office exploded. The other bombs were discovered before they detonated.

The newspaper, owned by a member of the Saudi royal family, is one of the largest and most influential Arabic-language papers in the world and is popular among expatriates in the West. Although it has run articles criticising Saddam Hussein and fundamentalism, its general news coverage is considered unbiased with moderate editorial positions.

A terrorism task force of local and federal law enforcement officials was investigating.

Newspaper officials who could comment further were not immediately available this morning.

### PRAYER TIMES

Fajr 04:55 (Sunrise) Dhuha 15:10 Dhur 11:41 Asr 14:27 Maghreb 16:50 Isha 18:12

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 5920740 Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Children's French programme Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4632366 Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751, Amman International Church Tel. 5865897 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 465-1932 St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440 Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138 Church of Presentation, Swieifeh Tel. 5920146 The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757 The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190 Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679 The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052 The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331 The American Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

### AMMAN:

Abdali Tel. Repairs ..... 566101

Firas Pharmacy ..... 5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy ..... 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy ..... 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy ..... 5536169

IRBID:

Dr. Lutfi Shibli ..... 02/241789

Fou'ad Pharmacy ..... 02/275360

### ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaseh ..... 09/982799

Palestine Pharmacy ..... 09/983562

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 4637111

Civil Defence Department ..... 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199

Rescue Police ..... 192-4621111-4637770

Fir Brigade ..... 4617101

Blood Bank ..... 4775121

Highway Police ..... 5343402

Traffic Police ..... 4896390

Public Security Dept ..... 4630321

Hotel Complaints ..... 5605800

Price Complaints ..... 566176

Water & Sewerage Complaints ..... 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 4771013

Telephone Information / directory assistance ..... 121

Overseas Calls ..... 0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 4632101

AMMAN:

Dr. Wafaa Al Masri ..... 4675485

Dr. Yousef Rashid ..... 4875792

Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhabi ..... 4758348

Dr. Khalil Jabi ..... 4784450

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

## Ecevit revives bid to lead Turkey's next government

ANKARA (AP) — A Turkish leftist leader appeared ready Monday to revive his bid to form a secular coalition government after a surprise declaration of support from former Premier Tansu Ciller.

In an abrupt about-face, Ciller said Monday her centre-right True Path party would now back a government led by Bulent Ecevit, a coalition she had previously rejected.

Ciller said she would not support premier-designate Yilmaz Erez, an independent lawmaker who picked up efforts to form a government after Ecevit's own attempt to do so failed.

Acting Premier Mesut Yilmaz, whose government fell in a mafia scandal in November, said his centre-right party would also back Ecevit's Democratic Left Party.

"For the first time, there seems to be a consensus that could win a vote of confidence," Yilmaz said.

Whatever government

finally emerges from the deal-making will be Turkey's sixth since 1995. Squabbles between centre-left and centre-right parties and disagreements over whether to allow Islamic leaders a role in any new government have slowed the coalition-building.

Ecevit had tried for three weeks to form a coalition that shut out the Islamic Virtue Party, the largest party in parliament, but his bid failed when he was unable to bring Ciller on board.

Now, with Yilmaz's and Ciller's support, Ecevit could command a majority in the 550-seat parliament.

Erez, a defector from Ciller's party, had won the conditional support of Yilmaz and Ecevit. If he loses it, Erez would have to give up on forming a government.

Erez had hoped to submit a proposed cabinet to President Suleyman Demirel this week.

Meanwhile, Turkey's

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### 28 killed in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least 28 people were killed and 10 others wounded when an anti-tank rocket was fired at a bus near the southern Somali town of Baidoa, the newspaper Xoggal reported Monday. The paper said that the bus was transporting civilians from Baidoa to Mogadishu at the time of the attack, which it said was carried out by the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA). The wounded, and those who died were taken back to the main hospital in Baidoa, a nurse at the hospital said. Two of the wounded died in Baidoa overnight while three others remained in a critical condition.

#### Iran to hold public funeral for 440 soldiers from the Iraqi war

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran will hold public funerals in Tehran on Friday for 440 of its soldiers who died in the 1980-88 war against Iraq, though 119 of them have not been identified, a military official announced Monday. "The funeral procession will take place at the end of Friday prayers in front of Tehran University," said General Mir Feisal Bagherzadeh, in charge of search operations for the bodies of Iranian soldiers. He was quoted by Iranian radio as saying that the remains of some 10 to 12,000 Iranians "are still in Iraq."

The socialist EDEK party withdrew from the coalition on Saturday after Clerides cancelled plans to deploy Russian-made missiles. Turkey had vowed to prevent them arriving militarily if necessary.

Omrou vice-chairman of the socialist party, had harsh words for Clerides' change of heart.

"There was severe injury to the sovereignty rights of Cyprus. It was a national humiliation," he told reporters.

The decision was praised abroad but condemned by opposition parties who were scuttling about a compromise to place the rockets on the Greek island of Crete.

DUBAI (AFP) — An Iraqi opposition group said its chief met Kuwait's emir on Monday to discuss efforts to overthrow President Saddam Hussein, as the opposition tried to woo Arab states which Baghdad has alienated. Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer Al Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), met Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah in Kuwait City, the group said in a statement received in Dubai. It said Hakim called for "Arab solidarity with the Iraqi people to get rid of the dictatorship."

## Government sets March deadline for illegal workers to rectify status

AMMAN (J.T.) — In what seems to be a determined move to deal with the problem of illegal workers and rising unemployment among Jordanians, Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh announced Monday that illegal workers who have failed to rectify their status by the end of March will be forced to leave the country.

Emerging from a meeting of the Higher Committee on Unemployment, Tarawneh said non-Jordanian workers who are found lacking valid work and residence permits within three months will not be allowed to stay on and the concerned authorities will ask them to leave Jordan.

"We will not tolerate any disregard of the existing laws and at the same time we welcome non-Jordanian workers who abide by the law and are legally employed. We secure for them full rights," said the prime minister.

Tarawneh said to date only 12,000 non-Jordanian workers have complied with the labour law, accord-

ing to figures supplied by the ministers of labour and interior.

No accurate figures of guest workers are available but some estimates put their numbers at around one million at a time when Jordan faces up to 25 per cent unemployment among its workforce.

**We will not tolerate any disregard of the existing laws'**

— Tarawneh

The Public Security Department said late last month that scores of illegal foreign workers are being deported almost daily.

According to the prime minister a large number of guest workers are not willing to rectify their status

## Agriculture ministry explores ways to deal with drought conditions

AMMAN (J.T.) — The potential for drought next summer dominated a meeting Monday of the Ministry of Agriculture's Planning Committee, now concerned that this winter's lack of rainfall may bear negatively on the agricultural sector.

The meeting chaired, by Minister of Agriculture Mihem Kheisha, discussed ways to reduce the effects on the public and boost coordination among the various concerned government departments and ministries in this respect.

The ministry plans to contact specialised international agencies with experience in coping with drought conditions to help Jordan overcome the problems that may arise from a drought, according to a statement released following the meeting.

The committee also discussed the water ministry's

decision to restrict the amount of water which farmers consume from artesian wells and its proposal that the farmers pay the cost of extra water used on their farms if consumption exceeds the 50,000 cubic metres level allowed them every year.

The ministry said that a technical committee of specialists from the ministry and other concerned departments has been formed to conduct a comprehensive and integrated study on the effects of drought and the exploitation of the artesian wells for irrigation. The committee will submit practical recommendations to deal with an emergency situation.

Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki told Parliament at a regular session Sunday that the government has drawn up a plan to face problems that

could arise in connection with water shortages next summer.

The plan entails controlling the use of water from 1,654 artesian well-owners as part of a national effort to combat illegal water usage.

The Water Authority last week referred 1,500 cases to court involving residents who allegedly illegally received water either by tampering with or damaging water meters.

The planning committee at the Ministry of Agriculture also reviewed the country's preparations for Arbor Day ceremonies to be held starting January 15.

The ministry said it plans to involve all public and private sector institutions in tree planting around the country supplying thousands of tree saplings from its nurseries.

## Engineers criticise sales tax, predict closure of 1,000 offices

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Jordanian Consulting Engineering Bureau on Monday criticised the government's decision to charge its members sales tax and described it as the straw that broke the camel's back.

The new tax law will force many consulting engineers offices to close down or minimise their operation," said Khalid Borini, chairman of the Jordanian Consulting Engineering Bureau.

In 1994, the government passed a law obliging engineering consulting offices to pay a tax of 10 per cent of its sales if operations exceed JD100,000 annually. In late 1998, the Council of Ministers made an amendment to the 1994 law to demand offices selling more than JD25,000 annually to pay the tax as well.

"The new amendment is a big burden on offices across the country considering how hard the current recession has hit the country," said Borini.

The engineering sector in Jordan suffers from both rampant joblessness and disguised unemployment.

"The new taxes will lead to further complication of the engineers' problems," said Borini, owner of a consulting engineering office.

The local market requires only 3,000 engineers while there are around 5,000 working in consulting offices across the country, he said.

The Water Authority last week referred 1,500 cases to court involving residents who allegedly illegally received water either by tampering with or damaging water meters.

The planning committee at the Ministry of Agriculture also reviewed the country's preparations for Arbor Day ceremonies to be held starting January 15.

The ministry said it plans to involve all public and private sector institutions in tree planting around the country supplying thousands of tree saplings from its nurseries.

## Deputies expected to lift immunity of Deputy Abbadi

By Tareq Momani

AMMAN — The Legal Committee of the Lower House of Parliament is likely to recommend that the House lift the immunity of Deputy Ahmad Owedi Abbadi so that he can be questioned in connection with two cases of alleged sexual assault, parliamentarians said Sunday.

However, lifting immunity cannot be used for the purpose of detention, said Deputy Mahmoud Kharabsheh, rapporteur of the Legal Committee, currently examining the cases referred to it by the House's Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali.

Emerging from the committee meeting, chaired by Deputy Ghaleb Zu'bi, Kharabsheh said committee members were of the opinion that the Parliament should facilitate procedures for questioning Abbadi but not for detaining him because, he said, the legal committee cannot act on behalf of the judiciary.

According to Kharabsheh, the committee's opinion is not unified.

According to House regulations, cases concerning the immunity of deputies are referred to the legal committee for review. The committee issues recommendations to the House

within a two-week period of time.

The Jordanian Constitution states that senators and deputies shall not be subject to court prosecution while Parliament is in session unless an absolute majority of the Lower House finds enough evidence to allow prosecution.

Abbadi has denied the allegations levelled against him, and the husband of the woman who filed one of the sexual assault cases against the deputy has dropped charges. But the legal committee says the husband's decision to drop charges does not mean that the case is dropped at the Lower House.

Following the committee's meetings on Monday, Kharabsheh said committee members were of the opinion that the Parliament should facilitate procedures for questioning Abbadi but not for detaining him because, he said, the legal committee cannot act on behalf of the judiciary.

Kharabsheh said the committee decided the postpone discussion of the issue until next Saturday when it is expected to take a decision, noting that the Parliament is keen to facilitate the work of the judicial system.

## what's going on

FILM  
• 'The Rock' at Books@Cafe, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457).

EXHIBITIONS  
• Photo exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 16.

• Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract plastic art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.

• Exhibition of Nabataean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).

• "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaima (Tel. 5526933), until Feb. 1.

• The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2, until Jan. 28.

## Jordanian medical aid to Iraq awaits government approval

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

Dajani the current chairman of the associations council of presidents.

AMMAN — The Jordan Pharmacists Association is awaiting government approval to send a shipment of pharmaceutical products to Iraq in defiance of the U.N. economic sanctions imposed on that country, Abdul Rahim Issa, head of the association said Monday.

The association, whose members own 1,600 pharmacies and 12 pharmaceutical factories, was scheduled to send the first shipment on Monday but the association was surprised by the government's delay in giving the green light.

"The products, scheduled to be exported to Iraq, were originally designated for the Jordanian market, which requires the association to obtain a special permission from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Interior Ministry to export them to Iraq," said Issa.

The Council of Presidents of the Union of Professional Associations has given the thumbs-up to the Jordan Pharmacists Association in its decision and considered it as a reflection of the desire of the Arab street.

"If the government insists on charging offices, we suggest that the tax be directly enforced on those applying for a building licence," added the engineer.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

The Jordan Consulting Engineering Bureau is scheduled to hold a general assembly meeting at the end of this month to discuss the issue and possible alternatives to combat the tax.

## 16 killed in Pakistan mosque massacre

MULTAN, Pakistan (AFP) — Gunmen massacred at least 16 people Monday when they burst into a temple just after dawn prayers and opened fire in one of the worst Muslim sectarian attacks, officials said.

Eight people from the Shiite Muslim mosque died instantly while others died on the way to hospital, where 13 others were reported to be in critical condition.

Pakistan has seen mounting tension between extremist groups of the minority Shiite community and the majority Sunnis.

The latest attack was immediately condemned by the government.

Officials said four assailants took part in the killings in Karamdad Koreshi, 50 kilometres west of the Punjab city of Multan.

The victims included the principal of a Shiite school.

Shops closed as the killings triggered demonstrations in towns in Punjab province where protesters demanded immediate action.

Witnesses said even before the bodies had been removed from the mosque students blocked traffic with burning tyres.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed his government would take the "terror-

ists" to task.

Stressing that Muslims could not imagine the "devastating act of shedding the blood of innocent people during the holy month of Ramadan," he said: "Anti-state elements are carrying out these nefarious acts to create instability in the country."

The attack came less than 24 hours after Sharif narrowly escaped an assassination bid, when a bomb exploded on a road he had been due to travel along.

The bomb was planted under a bridge close to his family farm near Lahore, about 200 kilometres northeast of Multan.

Six others were Shiite extremists accused of killing 22 Sunni Muslims in an attack on a mosque in September 1996.

Shiites form about 20 per cent of the 140 million population in Pakistan.

The country has been plagued by sectarian violence blamed on rivalry between the extremist Sunni group Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and their Shiite counterparts, Sipah-i-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP).

In January 1997, 26 people including SSP chief Ziaur Rehman Farooqi were killed when a bomb exploded in a court in Lahore.

A police official said security had been tightened after Monday's massacre.

majority Sunni and the minority Shiite communities have claimed several hundred lives in the past two years.

Monday's killings came only two weeks after a special anti-terrorism court sentenced to death 14 people from Shiite and Sunni extremist groups for sectarian murders.

The convicts included eight Sunnis accused of killing Iranian diplomat Muhammad Ali Rahimi and seven employees in an attack on Iranian cultural centre in Multan in February 1997.

Six others were Shiite extremists accused of killing 22 Sunni Muslims in an attack on a mosque in September 1996.

Shiites form about 20 per cent of the 140 million population in Pakistan.

The country has been plagued by sectarian violence blamed on rivalry between the extremist Sunni group Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and their Shiite counterparts, Sipah-i-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP).

In January 1997, 26 people including SSP chief Ziaur Rehman Farooqi were killed when a bomb exploded in a court in Lahore.

A police official said security had been tightened after Monday's massacre.

## Embattled press aide focus of feud in British cabinet

LONDON (AFP) — The political spin doctor at the centre of the row that forced two British government ministers to resign was back behind his desk Monday amid intense speculation that he would soon be out of a job.

The fate of Charlie Whelan is seen as an indicator of a long-running feud between Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Chancellor Gordon Brown, the man he beat to win the leadership of the Labour party in 1994.

Whelan is Brown's press aide, and is widely blamed — despite his denials — for a leak that led to the resignation of Blair's confidant Peter Mandelson as trade and industry secretary.

The story, that discredited junior treasury minister Geoffrey Robinson had lent 373,000 pounds (\$625,000) to Mandelson at preferential rate, also cost Robinson his job.

Brown is said to be privately bitter that Mandelson, then Labour's public relations supremo, switched sides to back Blair for the party leadership in

1994.

New grist was added to the mill with publication Monday in the British press of a memo Mandelson wrote to Brown advising him against standing against Blair.

Whelan has until now mostly been able to stay out of the public spotlight, but was met by a posse of reporters when he returned to his London home late Sunday after spending Christmas in the Scottish highlands.

Asked if he was going to resign, he said: "You will know in the morning."

Downing Street refused to draw into the speculation on Whelan's future. A spokesman insisted it was "a matter for the chancellor."

Yet however much Blair's office tries to steer clear of damaging publicity about a rift in the cabinet, a number of ministers are said to be calling for Whelan's resignation.

That at least is partly because of Whelan's ebullient style which includes briefings to favoured journalists.

Whelan's voluntary resignation would suit Blair, who would be free of his perceived trouble-making without being seen to lean on Brown.

The Guardian, which broke the Robinson loan story and has consistently denied Whelan was its source, reported Monday that he was ready to quit.

Friends of his apparently told the paper he would resign as soon as he had another job to go to, because he was dismayed at being the centre of so much press attention.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge which carries a maximum penalty of a fine of up to Singapore \$5,000 (\$3,000).

"I cannot be guilty of something that the constitution of my country guarantees," he told the court when asked to

enter a plea. Freedom of speech is enshrined in Singapore's constitution.

Chee Soon Juan, leader of the small opposition Singapore Democratic Party, told Reuters he would not back away from giving public speeches because he needed to "bypass the state media" and "find a different way to communicate with the people."

Chee appeared in court to be charged with giving a public speech on Dec. 29 without the permit the law requires all public speakers to obtain.

Police said at the time Chee refused to accept a written warning that he was about to make a speech without a permit and ignored a verbal warning not to go ahead.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge which carries a maximum penalty of a fine of up to Singapore \$5,000 (\$3,000).

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Asked if he feared an attempt would be made to snatch the two men from Pailin and put them on trial for the Khmer Rouge's 1975-79 agrarian revolution in which almost two million people died — quit the almost-defunct rebel movement last month and, in a visit to the capital, were feted by Premier Hun Sen.

Their VIP treatment, including a holiday at a beach resort, angered many survivors of the killing fields who want them tried. But the government allowed them Sunday to return to Pailin.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has

said he supports a trial but this is up to the courts, not him, to

arrange.

The government said that since no warrant existed for their arrest, they were free to travel wherever they wanted.

Political analysts say it would be difficult now to bring the two men to trial for the Khmer Rouge's 1975-79 agrarian revolution in which almost two million people died — quit the almost-defunct rebel movement last month and, in a visit to the capital, were feted by Premier Hun Sen.

Their military force is limited but they would fight against it.

The Angolan Armed Forces said at the weekend it had reopened Kuito's airport, offering a glimmer of hope



Opposition party leader of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) Chee Soon Juan speaks to reporters after leaving the subordinate court. Chee pleaded not guilty to giving a political talk without an official permit, and declared outside the court that he will stage another illegal rally (AFP photo)

## Singapore opposition politician to defy police

SINGAPORE (R) — A Singapore opposition politician pleaded not guilty Monday to a charge of making a speech without a permit and vowed to continue speaking even if he is detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

Chee Soon Juan, leader of the small opposition Singapore Democratic Party, told Reuters he would not back away from giving public speeches because he needed to "bypass the state media" and "find a different way to communicate with the people."

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"If they decide to use the Internal Security Act on me then there is nothing we can do. But I want to warn them also not to underestimate the will of the Singapore people," he said.

The ISA allows the detention of anyone deemed a threat to national security without trial for renewable two-year periods.

There was no immediate comment from the Singapore government, which says the ISA remains relevant to deal with racial and religious extremism, international terrorism, espionage and subversion.

"I think if you look at it not in a political partisan way, you will see that Singaporeans do not live in fear," junior Law and Home Affairs minister Ho

and 83 elected seats.

Chee's case will go to trial next week.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Chee said it was "very possible" he would be arrested under the ISA.

"I want to remind the government that they cannot continue to arbitrarily arrest citizens of Singapore," he said.

"



Chinese archaeologists excavate terracotta warriors at the secluded number two pit of the tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuangdi, in Xian. More than 6,000 terracotta figures of soldiers and horses have been excavated since the tomb was first uncovered in 1974. Xian, the capital of Shaanxi province in central China, was the capital (221-206 B.C.) of the Qin dynasty (Reuters photo)

## Supreme Court orders delay of 1st Philippine execution in 23 years

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Just three hours before a convicted rapist was to be put to death Monday, the Supreme Court ordered a six-month delay in the Philippines' first execution in 23 years.

Leo Echegaray, a poor house painter convicted of repeatedly raping his then 10-year-old stepdaughter, had been scheduled to die by lethal injection.

He was waiting by a prison death chamber for his execution when he was told of the court's ruling and wept with joy, a prison spokesman said.

About 100 anti-death penalty activists cheered outside the prison as a nearby church bell pealed.

President Joseph Estrada

expressed dismay, calling it a "sad day for law enforcement and the rule of law." In recent weeks, several lawmakers had expressed doubt whether capital punishment would deter crime and sought a congressional review of the law that restored the death penalty in 1994.

In its 8-5 ruling, the Supreme Court said "the merest chance that the Congress might reconsider" the law required that Echegaray, 38, be granted a postponement.

"This is definitely a victory, a significant first step in abolishing the death penalty in this country," said Echegaray's lawyer, Theodore Te.

Estrada, who has pledged to solve the country's serious crime problems, said the court overstepped its role of enforcing existing laws and promised to veto any new law repealing the anti-death penalty.

Echegaray's stepdaughter, now 15, said she was disappointed that many people, including church officials, sympathised with Echegaray.

"They don't understand what's happening to me now and what I'm feeling," the sobbing stepdaughter told reporters.

Echegaray, who was convicted in 1994, is the first among more than 800 death-row inmates to be

scheduled for execution. More than 450 of those on death row were convicted of rape, including 159 who abused their own children or other relatives.

Other death row prisoners shouted Echegaray's name in a deafening chant as he returned Monday to his cell, the prison chaplain said.

Officials at his prison in Muntinlupa, a Manila suburb, had set up barbed wire roadblocks and deployed extra military and police guards to hold back large numbers of reporters and the anti-death penalty activists.

Echegaray's scheduled execution set off a debate among many Filipinos over the death penalty. Several Manila radio stations opened their telephone lines so listeners could express their views.

Pro-death penalty activists who also rallied outside the prison condemned the court's ruling.

"They're siding with the criminals," said Eduardo Chan as he waved a photograph of his 12-year-old

lawyers.

daughter, who was gang-raped and killed in 1995. "They should have executed him so that others will have fear in their hearts."

President Joseph Estrada earlier turned down appeals from the Vatican, the European Union and Canada that the Philippines not resume capital punishment, saying he was obliged to follow the law.

Between 1924 and 1976, the Philippines executed 84 people. In 1987, a new constitution abolished the death penalty but gave Congress the option of restoring it for "heinous" crimes such as murder, kidnapping, rape and drug trafficking.

Legislators, alarmed by a rise in crime, brought back capital punishment in January 1994.

Roman Catholic bishops and other civic groups opposing the death penalty say there is no proof capital punishment deters crime. They also say poor people are more likely to be sentenced to death because they cannot afford good lawyers.

The court's decision to postpone the execution of Echegaray has been welcomed by human rights groups.

"It is the saddest of sad days," Susan Dillard, a court-appointed attorney who fought to keep Hugo with his sister and foster mother, said.

Hugo's aunt picked him up at the office, presenting him with an Ernie doll the boy has come to adore during dozens of visits with the aunt in New Jersey and Boston since March.

At the meeting, relatives of the aunt and the foster mother discussed plans to keep Hugo and Gloria in contact.

"They spent a fair amount of time together, and the families talked about how the children would keep in touch with each other," Dillard said. "His aunt is a wonderful, wonderful lady."

Hugo's trip went as

well as anyone could hope for.

The farewell came after a ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, which upheld a Juvenile Court decision separating the pair.

Susan Drogan, an attorney for the aunt who now has custody of Hugo, said she expects the boy will get through an initially tough period and come to prosper with his aunt.

"I'm not saying he's going to be happy when he realises his sister and her foster mother are no longer there," she said.

"Of course he will be traumatised. But he will be happy again."

His aunt is a wonderful, wonderful lady," Hugo's trip

through the state's child welfare system began just three days after he was born, when he was placed in foster care. He may have been injured by cocaine his mother used while pregnant, according to court papers.

When Hugo turned 2, the state transferred him to the home of his sister's foster mother, Enid. It was a traumatic move for the boy, but Hugo prospered under Enid's care, began to call Enid "Mommy" and developed a strong bond with Gloria.

Hugo's aunt, however,

fought to gain custody. In deciding to hand him over to her, the state's highest court acknowledged that it had made a "heart-wrenching choice."

The fourth guard, Rodolfo Bombarda, 52, of Carson, suffered wounds to his leg and abdomen. He was in fair condition Sunday night, a nursing supervisor said.

Doctors said he would be brain dead if he survives,

according to Martinez's son, Alfredo Connor.

"I never dreamed of coming to a place and seeing my father like this," said Connor. "I didn't even recognise him. Lying there for some miserable-paying job."

The Compton bus has been plagued by gang- and drug-related violence.

But residents of the New

Wilmington Arms said they

felt safe inside the block-long complex until the

shootings. The group of

two-story stucco apart-

ments and trim lawns is

home to about 600 people.

There were no immediate arrests. Police said the sus-

## Nazarbayev shrugs off criticism of Kazakh democracy days before vote

ALMATY (AFP) — President Nursultan Nazarbayev shrugged off mounting criticism of Kazakhstan's democracy Monday, days before a presidential vote in which some opponents charge has been engineered in his favour.

Nazarbayev told AFP in a written interview that he supported the formation of a multi-party system, local popular elections and an independent media as cornerstones of democracy.

But he warned that such reforms in the former Soviet central Asian republic must be instituted gradually.

"I don't accept just any flavour of democracy, if chaos, inter-ethnic feuds and people taking up arms ensues in the country under it," Nazarbayev said.

The Kazakh president has been criticised for his country's failure to uphold democratic standards in an election Sunday from which his main challenger, former premier Akezhan Kazygeldin, was banned from running on charges of minor administrative violations.

Nazarbayev however vowed to make the election process fair in the hopes of improving his country's tar-

nished image abroad.

"I think the best way to dispel any and all suspicions is openness and the transparency of the ongoing process," he said, pointing out that workers from the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other election observers have not met with any obstacles.

OSCE officials had asked the government to delay the vote so that the organisation could complete its preparations for the polls, but Kazakh officials refused to change the election date.

The OSCE request followed the government's unexpected decision to move up the presidential elections by one year, thus giving Nazarbayev's opponents less time to mount their campaigns.

If reflected, Nazarbayev said he would lead Kazakhstan through its second stage of transition now that the first step — economic liberalisation — has been completed.

"After the first stage when a state system was formed and the economy was liberalised, we crossed to the next task — the creation of a real multi-party system, an increased role of non-governmental organisations

and the creation of conditions to transfer part of the functions from the state to self-educated political institutions," he said.

Nazarbayev said a plan now being formulated for the election of a number of deputies in the lower house of parliament, the Majlis, on the basis of party lists is already causing political parties to become more active.

One of the next reforms would be a programme to elect mayors and regional governors, he said.

However, the president in the interview was vague about a time line for these and other reforms.

"It's not possible to exactly plan when and in what size certain political reforms will be conducted," he said. "For this, it is always important that the conditions ripen for their introduction."

Nazarbayev linked further political reforms and Kazakhstan's readiness for them with the population's ability to understand the basic principles of a market economy.

"After more than 70 years of totalitarian rule, there is a significant part of society that demonstrates and inability to adapt to market

principles and there are people who simply don't wish to recognise true capitalists," he said.

Nazarbayev said the economic and political crises in Russia and Southeast Asia only strengthened his belief that democratisation must follow the economic part of the transition to a market economy.

While Nazarbayev had been loath to admit earlier this year that the financial crises would affect Kazakhstan, now he said, "the situation in the economy has become a little complicated."

The Kazakh president, who is expected to win Sunday's election, said the majority of governmental activity in the next one to two years will be directed toward warding off the effects of the world economic crisis on this country of nearly 16 million people.

"We now are counting on actively attracting direct, long-term foreign investment in production and we will actively support local producers," he said.

In recent weeks, Nazarbayev also has announced plans to further the country's privatisation process and introduce private ownership of land.

**S. Korea, U.S. to meet ahead of Korean peace talks**

SEOUL (AFP) — U.S. and South Korean officials will meet in Washington next week to prepare for the next round of negotiations aimed at forging a permanent peace for the tense Korean peninsula, officials said Monday.

Seoul and Washington officials will hold working-level talks from Jan. 11 to coordinate their positions ahead of the so-called Four-party Peace Talks in Geneva from Jan. 18 to 22.

The foreign ministry's North American Affairs Bureau's director-general, Kwon Jong-Rak, will lead the Seoul team to the talks, while U.S. special envoy for Korean affairs, Charles Kartman, will head Washington's delegation.

Kwoo and Kartman will discuss the agenda at the Geneva peace talks — the first since October — which are aimed at replacing the current tense Korean armistice with a permanent peace mechanism.

The United States, South and North Korea and China will take part in the talks, which are expected to focus mainly on procedural issues.

Previous rounds of the talks have stalled over Pyongyang's insistence that withdrawal of 37,000 U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula be included on the conference agenda, a call Washington has rejected. The 1950-53 Korean war ended with a truce and not a full peace treaty, leaving the two sides still technically at war near half a century later.

The United States and North Korea have agreed tentatively to hold separate bilateral talks ahead of the four-party round. Kartman is chief U.S. negotiator with North Korea as well as chief delegate to the peace talks, while North Korea's Kim Gye-Gwan also represents his country in both forums.

## Scientists discover potential new wonder drug in frogs

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian tree frogs could hold the key to a new range of drugs to fight cancer and voracious bacteria like golden staph which closes hospital wards, a university research team has discovered.

The team from the University of Adelaide has established that the chemical arsenal that protected the frog through millions of years includes some of the most powerful hormones, neuropeptides, antibiotics and anti-virals yet found in nature.

Using world-class technology, the team, headed by chemistry professor John Bowie, has isolated more than 150 peptides — compounds of amino-acids — while investigating the skin secretions from about 20 of the 200 Australian native frogs.

Bowie is also collaborating closely with associate professor Mike Tyler on biological and zoological aspects of the research and with Adelaide Hospital Cancer Centre clinical director, Doctor Ian Oliver, to explore the possibilities of using the peptides as anti-cancer drugs.

The Magnificent Tree Frog, or *Litoria splendida*, produces a neuropeptide — or amino-acid compound found in the frog's nervous system — and analgesic 2,000 times more powerful than morphine which it uses as a hormone, analgesic and toxin to deter enemies that might want to eat it.

The Magnificent Tree Frog is most impressive in that it has huge glands called

parotid glands," Bowie told the university's Research Digest, seen here Monday.

"They contain about five or six major peptides which are all highly active."

When attacked or stressed they secrete the contents of the glands all over their skin, he said.

"One of these compounds is a very powerful antibacterial agent as well as an antiviral agent."

But while science is only now discovering the potential of the compounds found in frogs, Tyler said frogs are for the first time in worldwide decline.

Their numbers are plummeting in 140 countries around the world for no simple reason, although water pollution is believed to be a likely cause.

"We are seeing a tragic decline of frog populations world wide and if we can't stop it, humans will miss out on this wonderful pharmaceutical factory," said Tyler, who is the Australian representative of an international campaign to save the frog.

"Frogs have an enormous array of natural products and we've really only scratched the surface of understanding what they are and what they do."

To create an effective anti-cancer drug they must find a means of delivering the mol-

## Boy and his sister separated in potential landmark case

BOSTON (AP) — A 4-year-old boy and his 6-year-old sister exchanged stuffed animals and hugs in a tearful farewell that could spark a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the rights of siblings who are adopted or in foster care.

The boy's lawyers have appealed to the country's highest court to keep the brother and sister together. A ruling in favour of the boy could potentially reunite some 35,000 siblings nationwide.

Saturday, the boy — referred to in court papers as "Hugo L." — said goodbye to his sister, "Gloria L.", in a Department of Social Services office in Boston.

He will begin a new life with an aunt in New Jersey while his sister will remain in

Boston's Dorchester section, with the foster family that has adopted her.

"It is the saddest of sad days," Susan Dillard, a court-appointed attorney who fought to keep Hugo with his sister and foster mother, said.

Hugo's aunt picked him up at the office, presenting him with an Ernie doll the boy has come to adore during dozens of visits with the aunt in New Jersey and Boston since March.

At the meeting, relatives of the aunt and the foster mother discussed plans to keep Hugo and Gloria in contact.

"They spent a fair amount of time together, and the families talked about how the children would keep in touch with each other," Dillard said.

"Hugo's trip went as

well as anyone could hope for."

The farewell came after a ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, which upheld a Juvenile Court decision separating the pair.

Susan Drogan, an attorney for the aunt who now has custody of Hugo, said she expects the boy will get through an initially tough period and come to prosper with his aunt.

Doctors said he would be brain dead if he survives,

according to Martinez's son, Alfredo Connor.

"I never dreamed of coming to a place and seeing my father like this," said Connor. "I didn't even recognise him. Lying there for some miserable-paying job."

The Compton bus has been plagued by gang- and drug-related violence.

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1973

جريدة تايمز الأردنية независимая политическая газета на английском языке издана в Иордании

Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General  
Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor  
Abdullah Hasanat

Responsible Editor  
Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices  
Jordan Press Foundation,  
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Faxsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jotimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

## Bad management?

AFTER THE arrival of new gas shipments from abroad and the increase of local production to meet growing demand, the gas crisis that hit the country in the past few days seems to be over. The problem reached near-panic level in recent days, prompting Minister of Energy Hani Mulki to take charge of the shortage of gas cylinders in the country that amounted to a supply of only three days of consumption.

The cause of this winter's shortage is no different from previous years. The number of Jordanians who heat their homes with gas has increased in recent years, because fewer Jordanians can afford using more expensive means of heating such as central heating. The authorities should, therefore, make sure to add a certain percentage of gas containers every year to cater for the increase in the use of gas.

The effective steps being undertaken now in the wake of the crisis should have been taken a long time ago in a bid to preempt the projected rise in demand. Surely, the authorities can estimate what the national needs will be during cold weather. This winter season is still mild. Had we the normal winter weather this year, the problem could have been compounded. We should not be unprepared to meet such basic needs. Last summer we witnessed a water crisis. Now we have a gas crisis. Our authorities should plan for all contingencies not to mention all probabilities. While this time around, the gas container situation has been salvaged, it should not have occurred in the first place.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kawar said that when there are supply problems, citizens are blamed for buying more than they need and putting it in storage to the detriment of other people's. However, he said, it seems that the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company cannot blame people for the gas cylinders' shortage, because it is only partly responsible for the problem. According to Kawar, the 70-hour U.S.-British strikes on Iraq caused the shortage and the company is to blame for not taking any precautionary or even routine measures. The company should have stored extra amounts of gas cylinders for such situations, said the writer. The absence of a strategic gas storage was the real cause of the crisis rather than the trouble in Iraq. Only after the crisis started, did the company begin to import an estimated 40,000 tonnes of gas cylinders from new sources and floated a JD20 million tender to increase its storage capacity, claimed Kawar. What are the reasons behind the company's administrative negligence and irresponsibility, asked Kawar.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket urged government, parliament, the private sector, and civil society's institutions to cooperate and set up a national emergency programme to combat a number of crisis currently facing Jordan. It is obvious that the Kingdom is going through a difficult and sensitive stage, that need appropriate practical and responsible actions to protect the country's economic and social security, said Saket. Jordan must know how to manage such issues, which include economic depression, unemployment, poverty, water shortage and pollution problems as well as the current gas and energy conundrums, said the writer.

# Palestinian houses, Jacob, and the road to heaven and hell

## View from the Fourth Circle



Rami G. Khouri

nervous to the desperate need for revenge by those who are brutalised and dehumanised, and forever condemned to fear and to carrying rifles and bullet-proof vests. Jacob's mission was to rid our world of such menaces, not to perpetuate them.

Of all the contentious things that Israelis and Jews have done in Palestine, the physical destruction of the homes of Palestinians is perhaps the most monstrous and morally egregious, especially when judged by the noble and life-giving values of Judaism itself. I simply cannot understand how the state of the Jewish people — after their own terrible history of suffering — can destroy other people's houses as a systematic, deliberate and official policy.

I went back to reading the rabbi's article about Joseph and Judah, and the Jewish quest for "a peaceful world perfected under the Kingship of God," but the words were suddenly less convincing. I wanted to believe them, but I kept being distracted by poor Jacob — this tragic man, tribe, and nation that builds and destroys at the same time, that preaches life while also causing death, that takes us and itself to heaven and hell in a single, dizzying journey.

## Arabs have normal lives too, you know

By Ray Hanania

AFTER COMPLAINING loudly about the unfairness of the movie *The Siege*, I decided to take my protest one step further, by applying my comments to general Hollywood practice.

Arab Americans have a legitimate demand to be represented fairly by Hollywood, for we are not. Simply put, fairness doesn't exist when it comes to Arab Americans.

Arab Americans want to be treated fairly. We haven't asked Hollywood to discriminate against anyone else.

Despite that, my column in *Newsweek* which expounded this very principle, seemed to elicit a response from several of its readers who, in effect, concluded that Arabs are only discovering what other ethnic groups in America have not.

Well, I beg to differ.

The example most often cited in response to Arab American demands for fairness is the treatment of Hollywood of Italian Americans.

Certainly, Hollywood produces many movies about the Mafia. Good examples of this disparagement include the Godfather trilogy, *Goodfella*, *Donny Brasco* and *Casino*. These films typify the Hollywood portrayal of Italian American life.

Similar cases can be made for Indians — whose lands were stolen and whose cultures were raped, pillaged and destroyed by the wholesome American pioneers — and other groups including the Irish, Mexicans, and Arab culture in other films.

This is so important to the perceptions that Americans form as a result of heavy doses of exposure to Hollywood films.

The Hanks-Ryan movie is a love story in the modern age of Internet e-mail.

Besides the unbelievable experience of seeing American Online connect without any delays, busy signals, and at speeds 10

times faster than reality, the movie engaged the American mentality in its most vulnerable state: Americans love comedies and they love movies about love. These settings usually result in movie audiences leaving theaters sighing, cheerful and happy. And in those moments, the insertion of even the most subtle of ethnic messages benefits from the euphoria.

Why couldn't Tom Hanks have played one of New York's Arab citizens engaging in a friendship and loving relationship with someone they might have encountered through the Internet?

That is exactly what Arab Americans are complaining about. There is no counterbalance in these movies of Arab terrorism. In nearly every Hollywood movie that has a theme or subplot involving either Arabs or the Middle East, nearly every Arab character is negative. Oftentimes, these Arab terrorist are played by Israeli actors who exaggerate the anti-Arab negatives even more to satisfy their own anti-Arab political tendencies.

2. Although there are many movies about the downside of other ethnic groups, there are also many movies that provide positive images of the dispersed groups of Italian Americans, Irish Americans and Jews. In fact,



## Israelis trample on corpse of peace

By Robert Fisk

YOU HAD only to listen to the journalistic clichés to know 1998 would be the last year of the Middle East "peace process."

In January, it had to be "put back on track." By spring, it had to be "resurrected." By autumn, it had to be "salvaged." By year's end, even the BBC World Service's correspondent in Jerusalem was last forced to admit it was "dying."

Variously regarded as a railway train, a buried corpse, a sinking Titanic — anything rather than admit the truth — the Oslo agreement was in reality dead the moment it was signed. The Wye agreement, dutifully signed by Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat in October, was merely part of the wake.

When Mr. Netanyahu declared Jerusalem the unified and eternal capital, he told the Palestinians they had no right to take away Israel's sovereignty capital — even though the future of Jerusalem, like settlements and Palestinian refugees, was supposed to be part of the final status talks in the Oslo agreement next May.

But when Mr. Arafat, sick and humiliated, scorned by increasing numbers of his own people, suggested he might declare a Palestinian state if there was no May settlement, the Israelis turned on him vengefully.

First, the Israelis said, the Palestine National Council had renounced — for the second time — the clause in its charter that calls for the destruction of Israel. And only hours before it obediently did so, Israel produced more conditions: no more threats to declare a Palestinian state or violent protests against the peace accord.

Inevitably, the violent Palestinian Hamas movement, still demanding an Islamic state for all of Palestine, continued its war against Israel. "Terrorists," screamed the Israelis. When Jewish settlers shot down Palestinians they were called "extremists" or "zealots." Double standards have also been a foundation of the Oslo agreement.

But the "peace process" is not about fairness or justice; it revolves around just how little the Palestinians will accept in return for being a client kingdom of Israel. The Wye agreement — presided over by the fickle leadership of Bill Clinton — restated all the Oslo conditions that Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat had failed to meet but added a new pro-Israeli clause, which heaped the blame for all violence on to Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat was enjoined to hum down "terrorists," "terrorist cells" and the "terrorist structure" of "terror groups" — and he could forget the "terrorist" violence of Israeli settlers over whom there was to be no control — with the help of the CIA.

the West Bank to "seize every hilltop they can." Each Palestinian objection was treated as an attempt to destroy the "peace process."

When Mr. Arafat suspended peace talks because of the Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa settlement, he was accused of wanting to abrogate peace. When Palestinians protested violently against further settlements, they were told they were trying to kill peace.

When Mr. Netanyahu declared Jerusalem the unified and eternal capital, he told the Palestinians they had no right to take away Israel's sovereignty capital — even though the future of Jerusalem, like settlements and Palestinian refugees, was supposed to be part of the final status talks in the Oslo agreement next May.

But when Mr. Arafat, sick and humiliated, scorned by increasing numbers of his own people, suggested he might declare a Palestinian state if there was no May settlement, the Israelis turned on him vengefully.

First, the Israelis said, the Palestine National Council had renounced — for the second time — the clause in its charter that calls for the destruction of Israel. And only hours before it obediently did so, Israel produced more conditions: no more threats to declare a Palestinian state or violent protests against the peace accord.

Inevitably, the violent Palestinian Hamas movement, still demanding an Islamic state for all of Palestine, continued its war against Israel. "Terrorists," screamed the Israelis. When Jewish settlers shot down Palestinians they were called "extremists" or "zealots." Double standards have also been a foundation of the Oslo agreement.

But the "peace process" is not about fairness or justice; it revolves around just how little the Palestinians will accept in return for being a client kingdom of Israel. The Wye agreement — presided over by the fickle leadership of Bill Clinton — restated all the Oslo conditions that Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat had failed to meet but added a new pro-Israeli clause, which heaped the blame for all violence on to Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat was enjoined to hum down "terrorists," "terrorist cells" and the "terrorist structure" of "terror groups" — and he could forget the "terrorist" violence of Israeli settlers over whom there was to be no control — with the help of the CIA.

Israel condemns these "terrorist attacks," demanding yet more conditions that do not appear in the U.N. resolution.

If Labour takes power in the April Israeli elections, say the optimists, maybe the "peace process" will be put back on track again. But the dead cannot be resurrected and by April, the explosion that many in the region have warned of may well have come to pass.

Palestinian jails began to fill up again with "Islamists" and the PLO's torturers went back to work with the CIA's blessing.

Mr. Clinton used the opportunity of "saving the peace" to embellish his own failed statesmanship, accepting almost all Israel's demands — even considering the release of an Israeli spy who had been paid to steal American military secrets — while rewarding Mr. Arafat with a visit to Gaza.

For most of the year, the Palestinians burnt American flags. In December, they paused to fly the U.S. flag over Gaza to greet President Clinton as he stepped on to the soil of "Palestine." But within four days — once they realised that the "friend" of Palestine was abandoning them again — the Palestinians burnt the American flag once more.

Even before Mr. Clinton had left the Middle East, Mr. Netanyahu refused to carry out further troop withdrawals that Israel had promised and then suspended the Wye agreement altogether — no objections from the Americans, of course.

Unable any longer to balance his refusal to abide by the terms of the Oslo accord with the even more bellicose policies of extremists in his cabinet, Mr. Netanyahu called an election, which will suspend all relations with the Palestinians for more than three months — an effective death notice for Oslo.

Syria, which saw through the facade of Oslo from the start, still sticks to Resolution 242 as a foundation of peace and the return by Israel of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. And so does Lebanon, where Syrian-supported guerrillas from the Hezbollah movement continue to attack Israeli troops occupying the southern part of Lebanon — and whose withdrawal was supposed to have been completed in 1978 under the terms of U.N. Resolution 425.

Israel condemns these "terrorist attacks," demanding yet more conditions that do not appear in the U.N. resolution.

If Labour takes power in the April Israeli elections, say the optimists, maybe the "peace process" will be put back on track again. But the dead cannot be resurrected and by April, the explosion that many in the region have warned of may well have come to pass.

— The Independent

# The race is on for the first baby of 2000

A British television company is offering stardom for the first baby of the next millennium

By Peter Kingston

OF ALL days to have a birthday, can there be any worse than New Year's Day? Ponder it for a nanosecond. Most people around you are feeling wretched and hungover to boot. Everyone's fed up with celebrations, their systems addled with stale Yule. And the proximity of Christmas means you never get the presents you deserve.

"As a child it was so embarrassing," recalls Trevor Grove, former editor of the Sunday Telegraph, who was born on the first day of 1945. "As soon as people started singing 'Auld Lang Syne,' my mum would shout: 'Hey, remember everybody, it's Trevor's birthday'."

But worse, in anniversary terms, would be to pop out on the first day of the new millennium, while much of the Western world, including every consultant obstetrician on the planet, are getting blasted.

The rule about never giving birth at weekends, or on major public holidays because the senior medics have left the ship to a skeleton junior crew, will apply to the power of 10. Yet despite all these drawbacks, you can be quite sure that next March, many couples will be at it like knives or rabbits in the hope of conceiving a millennium baby. There is expected to be a 1.5 per cent increase in the birth-rate in the year 2000. And those to whom it won't occur to choose this folly will get a thudding nudge from ITV. For an incentive is being offered, one that catches the essence of these celebrity-obsessed times — stardom. Stardom for life, at that. Though it might be rather like spending your life as Jim Carrey in this year's creepy movie about a man born only to be viewed by others, *The Truman Show*.

Yorkshire Television is planning a series called *Birthtrace 2000* about babies born on January 1, 2000. The aim, says John Whiston, the station's programme director, is to follow couples through pregnancy, through delivery and beyond; perhaps turning up every few

years, along the lines of *Seven Up*. In order to get 10 likely couples, Yorkshire TV will run an advertising campaign urging couples to prepare for conception on the night which medical science calculates will be the most likely, if conception is achieved, to lob out a January 1 baby.

There is some disagreement about which will actually be the best night, dubbed the Great British Bonk by Whiston. The initial plan, basing advice from the National Childbirth Trust, was to pitch it on March 17, an evening which may have excluded many with Irish credentials, who would be distracted by St. Patrick's memory. But that date may be moved back to between March 25 and April 4. On that evening, Yorkshire TV plans programmes to put viewers in the mood. There will probably be suggestive clips from old comedies, maybe footage of various fornicating fauna and other squiddy stuff.

That period would be the window of opportunity (if that's quite the phrase we want), if the target is January 1, says Professor James Drife.



The incentive is stardom, a TV series about the babies born on January 1, 2000, though it might be rather like spending your life as Jim Carrey in this year's creepy movie about a man born only to be viewed by others, *The Truman Show* (file photo)

professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at Leeds General Infirmary. But even if the correct date is picked for a conception attempt, there is still only a 4 per cent chance of birth happening on the "due date" if nature is allowed to follow its course, he says. "The odds are heavily stacked against success."

There are so many imponderables and variables. The two main ones are the odds on conception and then on punctual arrival. "At best the chance of conceiving on a certain cycle if both partners are fine is 1-in-3." The due date is calculated in two ways: 280 days from the start of a woman's period, which for January 1 would be March 25, or 266 days after conception. But the due date is only a rough guide. It is quite usual for birth to come within two weeks either side. And crunching these figures up, you get the 1-in-25 odds.

The only half-reliable way for the noodle-headed still dazzled by a millennial birth would be to overshoot, as it were. Babies will and must not be kept in if they are ready to come out, but it is quite feasible to intervene if they are overdue and get them out by Caesarian section or hormonal induction. A Caesarian for other than medical reasons would not normally be countenanced under the NHS for a baby only a few days overdue.

Wanting to deliver right after Big Ben starts ringing in the New Year would not be an exception to this rule. An obstetrician would say that the very worst time to have a

baby in terms of safety is in the middle of a public holiday, particularly in the middle of the night," says Professor Drife. "A request for a Caesarian for one minute after midnight would be very ill-advised — medical caution would be against it."

There are exceptions. Some women who have difficult pregnancies, or have had bad ones in the past, are often given a fixed date for Caesarian births well ahead. Now if that day just happened to be January 1: well... they might be in luck.

In the private sector, however, the rules are looser about "elective" Caesarians. "Career women might successfully elect to have Caesarians because they want to go back to work soon," says Dr. Simon Fishel, an infertility specialist. But even in the private sector, an ambition to whip out the first baby of the third millennium out on deadline would be unlikely to find favour. And even if it did, the cost of assembling the necessary team of surgeon, an anaesthetist and the rest of the team during the last hour of 1999 would be prohibitive. Will anybody pay that much for a vanity birth?

Dr. Fishel said that couples wanting medical intervention at conception to boost the chances of a January 1 baby would again be unlikely to find help in the private sector. "We have couples asking for a winter baby because of each partner's work schedules. We basically say: on your bikes." But there are exceptions, says Dr. Fishel. For instance, an international opera star with a tight timetable who was in England for just a month was allowed to have fertility treatment.

There are the folkloric means of bringing on labour when the due date has come or passed: a hot curry or hotter lovemaking. And on New Year's Eve there is a further possibility. "I reckon I started to move downwards during 'Auld Lang Syne,'" says Trevor Grove. "It was all that kicking about my mother was doing."

— *The Guardian*

## Set a thief to catch a thief

When Trinidad & Tobago found itself saddled with a pest problem it had never encountered before, the old, chemical methods seemed to do no good, so they turned to the use of insects to defeat the invading pest.

By Darryl Dean

GARDENERS IN Trinidad began noticing the danger signs about three years ago: Deformed fruits and flowers on trees and insects overrunning plants, their leaves curled andunched together in rose-like fashion.

The invading bugs, wrapped in their white cotton-like shrouds, spread at an alarming rate through various parts of the country.

The pest — identified as the hibiscus mealybug or maconellicoccus hirsutus (green) — posed a growing threat to food crops, ornamental plants and forests. It also disrupted inter-island trade in the region.

If the bug bad managed to spread and get out of control in the Caribbean, officials say it would have had a tremendous impact on the price of fruit and vegetables.

But today, the hibiscus mealybug is reported to be under control in Trinidad and Tobago, and the government's handling of the problem is widely regarded as an environmental success story.

"So successful has it been that the scientific community in the region has taken an interest in our management strategy," said Cynthia Persad, coordinator of the pest control programme run by the ministry of agriculture here.

Agriculture Minister Reesa Mohammad cites studies that showed that the agricultural sector would have suffered losses amounting to T\$700 million over a period of about three years had the government of Trinidad and Tobago not taken the necessary action to deal with the pest.

"We have brought the pest to the level where it is causing no negative economic impact on the agricultural community," Mohammad said.

Sugar, cocoa, coffee and fruits and vegetables are among Trinidad and Tobago's main agricultural exports.

Mohammad also noted that his ministry has been providing technical assistance to several countries in the Caribbean Community affected by the pest and that officials from various countries in Latin America have visited Trinidad and Tobago for first-hand information about the systems which the country developed to deal with the problem. Countries all around the world threatened by the bug could benefit from Trinidad's experience.

Veterinarian Vincent Moe, and adviser to the minister of agriculture, noted that the hibiscus mealybug entered Trinidad at the wharves here with agricultural produce from the neighbouring island of Grenada

where the pest caused widespread damage.

"We have had a vibrant trade with our Caribbean Community neighbours, including Grenada which had been sending us regular shipments of fresh fruits and vegetables," Dr. Moe said.

But the discovery of the mealybug in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago had a considerable impact. In 1995, several Caribbean countries suspended the importation of agricultural products from Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada.

Plant protection regulations were amended here to require import permits for all fruits and vegetables and planting materials.

In September 1995, agriculture ministers of the Caribbean and the

**The predatory beetles feed on the bugs at all stages of their development, while the parasitic wasps puncture the adult bugs and feed on the oozing body fluids**

Americas declared the hibiscus mealybug a new pest in the Western Hemisphere and a regional action plan was set up with the long-term goal of achieving sustainable control of the pest.

"As long as the insect is present in one country in the region, every other country is at risk," said an official in the Ministry of Agriculture in Port of Spain.

Among the projects included in the action plan were developing a regional capability for identifying the pest and its natural enemies, the upgrading of plant quarantine facilities and the mounting of information and public awareness programmes.

Trinidad began its action plan with a public awareness campaign to inform citizens about the newly-discovered bugs. It also intensified plant quarantine measures and introduced a pest control programme.

At first, Trinidad tried the more traditional method of pest control:

Slashing and burning the affected plants and spraying infested areas with chemicals. But this proved ineffective. No chemical pesticide could penetrate the waxy covering with which the insects protect themselves.

"We realised that we had to introduce measures which would destroy the bugs but not harm the environment," said Persad. "So an integrated pest management control programme was launched."

The major focus of this programme was the use of biological control agents, Persad said, noting that this was considered "the best long-term option."

She explained that the type of mealybug discovered in Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean countries is commonly found in tropical Africa, South-East Asia and Northern Australia.

Researchers went looking for the pest's natural enemies — other insects which would destroy the hibiscus mealybug. They found three: The Indian and Australian beetles and Asian wasps.

The predatory beetles feed on the bugs at all stages of their development, while the parasitic wasps puncture the adult bugs and feed on the oozing body fluids.

Researchers studied, reared and multiplied the beetles and wasps before releasing them at several sites with heavy mealybug infestations.

"The release were highly successful. The beetles and wasps immediately went on the rampage, attacking the bugs," Persad said.

As part of the ministry of agriculture's plan to make the bio-pesticides more accessible to farmers, several centres to produce the beetles and wasps, were set up in different parts of the country.

Huge saaman trees became ideal locations for the multiplication of the beetles.

"These magnificent trees, forty or fifty years old, with canopies extending a quarter of an acre or half an acre, were susceptible to the hibiscus mealybug," Persad said.

"We did lose some saaman trees during the early stages of the mealybug attack but what was remarkable about the predator beetles was that they found the saaman trees to be excellent places for producing more beetles."

"And we were able to collect the larvae from the beetles at those locations and move them to other sites where they were needed."

— Gemini News

THE TINY South Atlantic island of St. Helena is pinning its hopes for economic growth on ecological tourism, but its plants are ranked the most endangered in the world.

The predatory beetles feed on the bugs at all stages of their development, while the parasitic wasps puncture the adult bugs and feed on the oozing body fluids

The picturesquely island of St. Helena is facing an ecological disaster (file photo)

THE TINY South Atlantic island of St. Helena is pinning its hopes for economic growth on ecological tourism, but its plants are ranked the most endangered in the world.

The World Conservation Union said in a report last April that 40 per cent — about 1,200 miles west of Angola, government conservation chief Rebecca Cairns-Wicks said the real figure was far higher.

"For the size of government and the financial resources we have, probably a lot is being done (for conservation)," Smallman said in an interview in the walled castle built after Britain settled the island.

He said some plants had been brought back from the brink of extinction and within the past month, conservationists had found a single example of a boxwood plant thought to have died out decades ago.

In an area known simply as Scotland, Vanessa Thomas is coaxing life back into species that have been reduced to single trees and shrubs, nurturing cuttings, coddling seedlings and pollinating young plants in special seed orchards.

"Maybe, one day many years from now, we'll have habitats that perhaps resemble what once was here, but at the moment we have a very disturbed habitat," she said.

They kept its existence a secret, putting goats ashore to breed for meat, but making no effort to settle the island.

Britain claimed and settled the island in 1513 and for centuries, St. Helena served as a watering place for ships, as a telegraph relay station, as

Napoleon's final place of exile and as a prison camp for Boers captured in South Africa.

It was the goats that did the most to wreck the pristine ecology of the island, leaving the slopes of the Jamestown valley that flanks the small capital bare and red.

Inland, however, thickly wooded misty slopes and narrow, winding lanes present an entirely different aspect.

Fox, which was the island's

chief export until the British post office switched in the 1960s from sisal string to synthetic nylon, still lines many roads.

"St. Helena has experienced that when man comes along with associated animals and plants, species that were found there very quickly disappeared," Cairns-Wicks said.

"We have very rare flora, where species have been reduced to one or two individuals." With a shoestring budget and the dedication of islanders committed to undoing the damage wrought by goats, donkeys and alien plants, conservationists are slowly reversing the decline.

"For the size of government and the financial resources we have, probably a lot is being done (for conservation)," Smallman said in an interview in the walled castle built after Britain settled the island.

He said some plants had been brought back from the brink of extinction and within the past month, conservationists had found a single example of a boxwood plant thought to have died out decades ago.

In an area known simply as Scotland, Vanessa Thomas is coaxing life back into species that have been reduced to single trees and shrubs, nurturing cuttings, coddling seedlings and pollinating young plants in special seed orchards.

"Maybe, one day many years from now, we'll have habitats that perhaps resemble what once was here, but at the moment we have a very disturbed habitat," she said.

They kept its existence a secret, putting goats ashore to breed for meat, but making no effort to settle the island.

Britain claimed and settled the island in 1513 and for centuries, St. Helena served as a watering place for ships, as a telegraph relay station, as

she said.

The island has a small grant from the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and a bit more from other conservation agencies, but as a British dependency, it has been denied the status and aid flow of a developing country.

Jasper Steele, St. Helena's chief agricultural and natural resources officer, sees the ecology as the key to financial independence.

"St. Helena has the image of an island that is unspoiled, but in fact it has been fairly thoroughly spoiled over the years by the devastation of the goats and donkeys and cats and so on," he said.

Though the island is not unspoiled, it is unpolluted and Steele believes there is a business to be made out of that.

"What I am trying to do is to establish our department as an organic certification body under the auspices of the Soil Association of the United Kingdom.

"We'd be in a position eventually to certify products from the island as being organic with the Soil Association logo," Steele believes the growing global market for products grown and made without chemicals and fertilisers is one that St. Helena could crack.

"I think this is very important because this is where the niche lies — in this purity market," he said.

Right now, the island's most pressing needs are for investors to set up that business and for funding to save the plants that help to make the island unique.

— Gemini News



# Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Tuesday, January 5, 1999 9

## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Banker sees difficulties in improving living standard if high population growth continues

**IF POPULATION** growth continues at the same rates witnessed during the past 30 years, it would be very difficult to expect a noticeable improvement in the living standard, a senior Jordanian banker said in a lecture recently. He stressed the importance of overcoming the imbalance between the high rate of population growth and the inability to increase the resources in a way and by a volume that would maintain equilibrium in the relationship or improve it in the service of the people.

Wasef Azar, general manager of the Jordan National Bank, said the Jordanian society did not give enough attention to the imbalance between the resources and the population. He proposed remedying the imbalance through controlling the annual population growth and reducing it to the lowest possible level on the one hand and, on the other hand, seeking to boost the available resources so as the share per capita would be much more than what it is now.

The senior banker said there has been improvement recently in legislative development but, he added: "It still lacks a more comprehensive interaction with the private sector in all aspects and its implementation is slow." Azar indicated that if many legislations, including economic ones, were completed they still have not matched the developments in terms of opening up to the outside world as new dimensions with direct economic effects were taking place.

"If Jordan is unable to stay away from international requirements to open its market, it must therefore move fast to develop legislations in order to place the productive sectors on the same footing with foreign competitors or to neutralise the advantage

they enjoy and are not available to the Jordanian producer.

The most important legislation needing updating is the customs law or the regulations for its implementation, Azar said. In addition, he mentioned the importance of expediting the issuance of a law to protect local production. Such a law would provide the necessary measures to counter dumping policies and price undercutting. "There could also be a need to bring in legislations for encouraging competition and banning monopoly and protecting intellectual property rights," the senior banker said noting that both legislations would be important for foreign producers and damaging for the Jordanian market. "Should there be no way except to issue such legislations, it would be appropriate if the public sector would ease their effects on Jordanian producers and consumers."

The last area mentioned by the lecturer was the administrative development which he described as below the acceptable level despite the overwhelming desire of the political leadership and the consecutive governments for improvements and for minimising routine which stands as the major barrier facing investors, producers and exporters.

"The civil servant is still not directed or trained in many institutions to provide the good service at the lowest cost and in quickest time," Azar said adding: "Many civil servants do not realise the amount of loss for the country as a result of the administrative complexities which may not be the fault of the employee as is much as the efficiency of regulations which have not been reconsidered and revised." (AI Dustour)

### Euphoria grips European markets

LONDON (AFP) — The euro immediately staked its claim as a world-leading currency Monday in a successful first day of trading in London, with euphoria spreading to Europe's stock markets.

Challenging the dollar and yen as the dominant tender, the 11-nation currency sustained its firm worldwide debut overnight in Asia, dipping on profit-taking before rising back above the \$1.18 level.

"In all likelihood, it'll become the second largest traded currency, but it's far too soon to say so," said Paul Meggyesi, senior currency economist at Deutsche Bank.

Chief European economist at ING Barings in London, Mark Cliffe, said the first day of the euro's life had "gone remarkably smoothly" although "people are trading very warmly."

Late Monday in London, the world's leading foreign exchange market, the new currency traded at \$1.1870, up from \$1.1795 at midday and \$1.1810 on opening. It was being traded at 133.07 yen, compared to 134.28 yen earlier and 134.57 yen in Tokyo.

On Thursday the last reference rate for the ECU, which was transformed into the euro, was \$1.16675 and 132.800 yen.

The European Central Bank (ECB), the guardian of the euro, late Monday issued its first euro reference rates as one euro equaling \$1.1789, 133.73 yen, 0.711 pounds and 1.6168 Swiss francs.

An economist with the Bank of America in London, Robert Hayward, said that the euro might rise as high as \$1.22 in the next few days.

Stock markets in continental Europe bounded into the stratosphere in reaction, with Frankfurt's X-DAX closing 5.67 per cent higher, the Paris CAC-40 5.20 per cent higher, Madrid's Ibex-35 6.21 per cent higher, and Milan's Mib 30 6.39 per cent higher.

However, because the strength of the euro would make European exports more expensive, the upward drive was expected to make the equity boom short-lived, analysts said.

London, which is outside the euro zone, closed 0.05 per cent lower on a bearish outlook for the British economy this year.

The euro, which is joined by all EU members except Britain, Denmark, Greece and Sweden, was broadly hailed as a new super currency.

In Japan, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was quoted as saying by Jiji Press that the yen was far behind in the new "triangle system," saying that "the yen maintains only a five per cent share" of the world market.

However, U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary

Lawrence Summers said that he did not expect the dollar to push off its perch as the world's preferred reserve currency.

"I don't see a reason why the euro should be a threat ... as long as we can keep our own emphasis on our fundamentals," he said.

Asked if a possible erosion in the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency could prompt higher U.S. interest rates to shore up the greenback, Summers said: "As far as the dollar is concerned now, the buck stops here."

"As long as we keep our fundamentals strong, I think the dollar and U.S. borrowing costs will be just fine," he added.

Britain is deeply divided over whether or not to join the euro zone and Prime Minister Tony Blair reiterated his pledge to hold a referendum when he considered the economic conditions to be right.

However, London is expected to be able to maintain its role as Europe's dominant financial centre, analysts said.

Foreign exchange analysts in London expressed relief that the weekend's hectic preparations for the market launch of the euro had gone well, but said that volumes were cautiously low.

London's banks and brokerages had just over three days from Thursday to convert their trading systems and accounts from the 11 participating national currencies into euros in time for Monday morning.

The biggest fear was a crash of systems and there hasn't been one," the global head of treasury research at ABN Amro, Tony Norfield, said.

"It's hard to judge a much more definite direction with the small amount of trading going on," he said. "The market is taking it easy for the first day of trading and is waiting to see if all the computers and systems work."

In Frankfurt, the ECB dismissed as "rumours" reports that it had intervened earlier in Asia to prevent the euro rising too strongly against the dollar.

"These are rumours and we do not comment on rumours," ECB spokesman Manfred Koerber said.

Meanwhile, the pound weakened to 1.4089 euro to the pound from an estimated 1.4139 when euro conversion rates were set on Thursday, and was likely to continue to fall to about 1.40 euros, analysts said.

Nick Parsons, at Paribas, said the British pound and the Swiss franc are going to be more and more marginalised.

The British currency is also under pressure ahead of a Bank of England monetary policy meeting on Wednesday and Thursday.

Bank of England Governor

Eddie George said Monday that British interest rates — at 6.25 per cent, compared to three per cent in the euro zone — could continue to fall if inflation remains low.

Meanwhile, U.S. traders reacted cautiously to the euro in early trading here Monday, waiting to see which way the market would take the new currency once the euphoria surrounding its launch declined.

"It's replaced the mark as the main European currency, so there is of course a lot of portfolio reallocation in euros," said Henry Willmore, senior economist at Barclays' Capital. "But we saw the curiosity fading out of Asia overnight."

The euro was trading at \$1.18 dollars in early trade in New York after closing at 1.1885 in Asia.

For the moment, added Paul Farrell, an analyst with Chase Manhattan Bank, "the market is trying to get a sense of where it should be." "It's not in the European interest to have a very strong euro right now," he said. "A strong euro is fine to get confidence in the new arrangement but a euro too strong would squash any export-led recovery they might have."

Strong currencies tend to drive up prices of exports, making them less competitive.

The ECU, which was replaced by the euro, closed out its career on Thursday at \$1.1721, sustained by gains in the British pound sterling.

Dealers said the initial response to the euro has been positive and is likely to remain so over the new few months.

But analysts stressed that such asset reallocation could only take the euro so far, as the new currency will soon have to reflect European economic fundamentals.

U.S. officials meanwhile hailed European monetary union and reiterated their conviction that a strong euro would not threaten the status of the dollar as the world's leading reserve currency.

The United States has always supported an integrated Europe and anything that steps forward to that goal is supported by the U.S. government and anything that generates growth is good for the American economy," White House spokesman Joseph Lockhard told reporters.

Both Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and his deputy, Lawrence Summers, stressed that the United States had nothing to fear from the euro — provided U.S. economic fundamentals remain sound.

"The euro just reemphasises ... how important it is to focus on our own policies

and continue to make the United States a place where people want to invest their capital," Rubin said.

"I have no doubt that markets will fluctuate as they always do ... That is not where our focus needs to be.

Our focus needs to be on keeping our house in order and when our house is in order we will be in fine shape," he emphasised.

Interviewed by CNBC television, Summers said he was confident the European Central Bank would be committed to exchange rate stability regardless of any potential trade disputes with Washington.

"We have recognised for a long time that the dollar exchange rate cannot and should not be a tool of trade policy," Summers said.

"I think it is clear from statements of the European Central Bank that they recognise the importance of currency stability, and they know, as we often say, that no nation or for that matter region can devalue its way to prosperity," Summers said.

"Europeans are going to

seek competitiveness in the same way as we do — by producing better products at lower cost. That's the way it ought to be done."

In the run-up to the launch of the euro, analysts in both Europe and the United States foresaw a situation in which a successful European currency could have a recognisable impact on the U.S. economy.

"The euro pretty quickly will start to rival the dollar as an international asset," Fred Bergsten, director of Washington's Institute for International Economics, told the Wall Street Journal.

Other analysts have raised the possibility that the euro, the first truly alternative vehicle to the dollar, might divert huge amounts of international funds that until now have tended to flow with little question into the U.S. economy.

They have said the development of more liquid European financial markets could drain off some of the \$1 trillion that were invested in U.S. equity markets in 1997.

#### A.F.M TRADE ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB BK	210.000	214.500	+ 2.14%
INT'L BK	1.640	1.560	- 4.88%
THE HOUSING BK	2.740	2.750	+ 0.36%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.560	1.580	+ 1.28%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.650	1.620	- 1.82%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.560	0.570	+ 1.79%
<b>BANKS INDEX</b>			
	280.690	280.690	point = +1.55%
<b>INSURANCE</b>			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.680	2.710	+ 1.12%
JO. GULF INS	1.670	1.690	+ 4.97%
<b>INSURANCE INDEX</b>			
	125.630	125.630	point = +0.56%
<b>SERVICES</b>			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.550	1.630	+ 5.16%
IRIB ELECTRICITY	1.550	1.530	- 5.16%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.800	0.800	0.00%
REAL ESTATE	1.100	1.100	0.00%
AL-RAY	5.570	5.550	- 2.12%
ARAB INT'L FOR INVEST.	1.930	1.930	0.00%
UNION LAND DEV	0.570	0.570	0.00%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.160	1.170	+ 0.86%
<b>SERVICES INDEX</b>			
	109.920	109.920	point = +0.72%
<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3.260	3.350	+ 2.76%
PHOSPHATE	1.590	1.570	- 5.03%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.200	10.300	+ 0.98%
THE INO. COMM. & AGRIC	1.210	1.150	- 4.96%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.660	2.740	+ 3.01%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.220	1.240	+ 1.84%
RAFA	0.520	0.530	+ 1.92%
DAR AL DAWA	5.100	5.200	+ 1.98%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.560	0.550	- 1.79%
ARAB ALUMINUM	1.900	1.860	- 2.11%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.390	0.400	+ 2.56%
NTL IND	0.350	0.370	+ 5.71%
PETRO. CHEMICAL	0.330	0.330	0.00%
ROCKWOOL	0.290	0.290	0.00%
NTL CABLE	0.650	0.650	0.00%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.380	0.390	+ 2.63%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHAR	1.220	1.220	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.630	0.640	+ 1.59%
FOOD FACTORIES	1.050	1.000	- 4.76%
IND. RESOURCES	0.460	0.450	- 2.17%
NTL ALUMINUM	0.700	0.700	0.00%
<b>INDUSTRY INDEX</b>			
	79.230	79.230	point = +1.39%

#### JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE

##### DAJANI JEWELLERS

Many villas and apartments for rent and sale  
Furnished & unfurnished  
For more information call:  
Abdoun Real Estate  
592050559206094 079/530007  
Web Site is  
[www.abdoun.com.jo](http://www.abdoun.com.jo)

##### "WAVES OF STYLES"

Your Address In Amman  
CRYSTAL  
Quality Serviced Suites  
\*One & Two Bedrooms \*Fully Equipped Kitchens \*Daily & Long Stay \*Reasonable Rates  
5th Circle  
Tel.: 5692672 - Fax: 5674551  
e-mail: crystal@go.com.jo

## United States beaten in day of Hopman Cup shocks

PERTH (AFP) — Sweden scored an upset win over the Lindsay Davenport-led United States and France's Sandrine Testud beat Spanish star Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in a day of shocks at the Hopman Cup on Monday.

Davenport and Jan-Michael Gambill, the second seeds in the mixed teams competition, suffered a shock defeat against the unseeded Swedish pair of Jonas Bjorkman and Asa Carlsson.

Bjorkman and Carlsson won the decisive mixed doubles 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 after the singles honours had been shared.

Davenport, the World No. 1, blitzed Carlsson 6-2, 6-0 in 52 minutes in the women's singles but Bjorkman revived Swedish hopes when he beat Gambill 6-2, 6-4.

Bjorkman battled through with a troublesome right hamstring which could handicap him in the rest of the tournament.

"I even surprised myself that I played so well in the singles and doubles," Bjorkman said.

Davenport said the defeat was obviously a setback to U.S. hopes, but they were out of the competition.

"We have to be positive about it," she said. "The more we play together, the better we will get. The mixed doubles was a bit awkward today. I felt a little hit out of place."

Gambill said there were controversial calls for both teams in the doubles.

"One call in the first set tiebreaker was the worst I have ever seen in my short career. It is just one point, but it hard for you to get it out of your head," he said.

The United States must now win their next two matches against Switzerland's Ivo Heuberger and Martina Hingis on Thursday and the third-seeded reigning Slovak champions Karol Kucera and Karina Habsudova on Friday, to have a chance of reaching Saturday's final.

Testud romped to a 6-1, 6-3 win over Sanchez Vicario as unseeded France made a marvellous start to their contest with title favorites Spain.

"Arantxa did not play her best today, but I am very happy to have won," said Testud.

"She is a very good player, and I just tried to keep concentrating."

It was Testud's third successive win against the Spaniard, following victories at Key Biscayne and San Diego in 1997.

Before that, the Spaniard had won three consecutive matches against Testud.

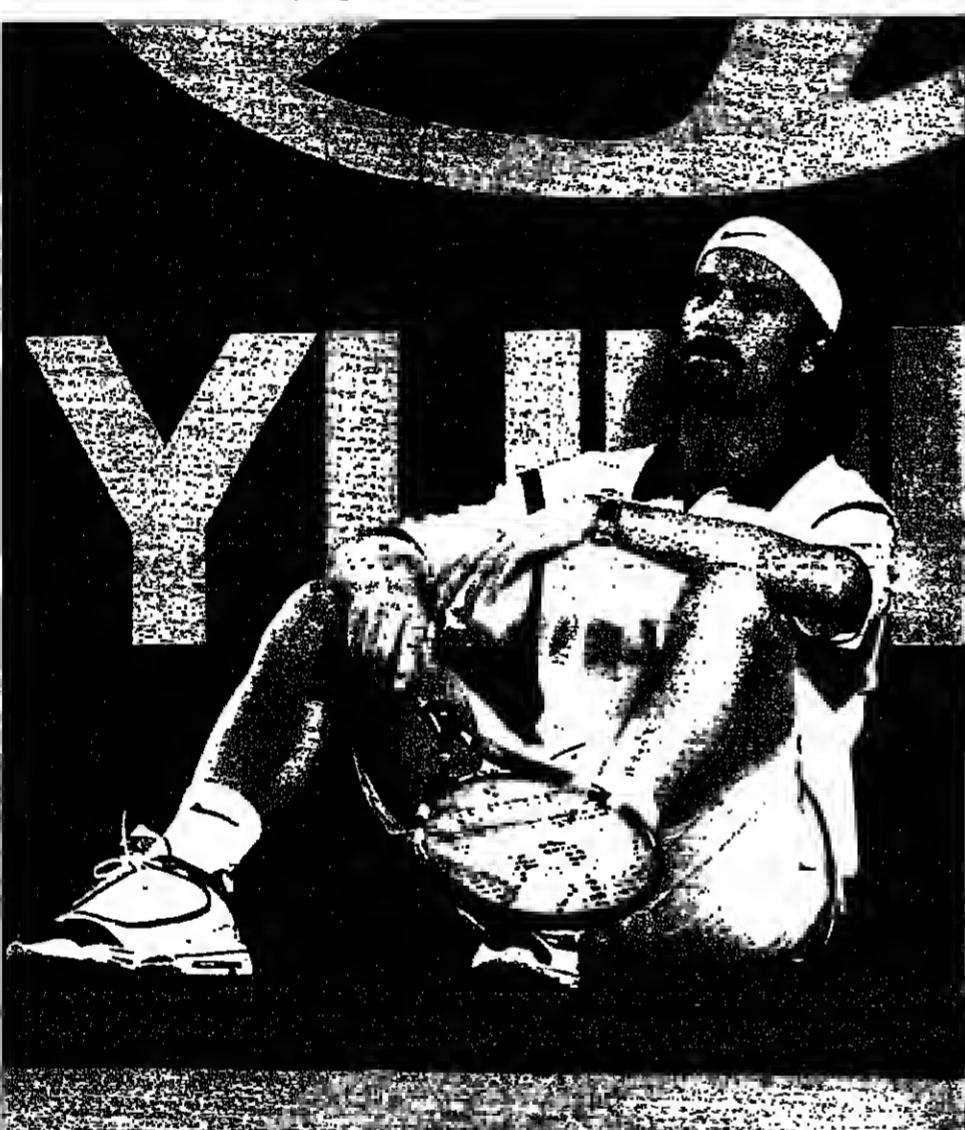
Testud, ranked 14th in the world — 10 places below her opponent — powerfully broke the Spaniard's service in the fourth and sixth games of the opening set.

Sanchez picked up her game in the second set, breaking Testud twice to take a 3-1 lead before the French player rallied to break back in the fifth, seventh and ninth games.

In the men's singles, France's Guillaume Raoux, ranked 53rd in the world, was playing Spain's World No. 5 Carlos Moya.



Sandrine Testud of France in action against opponent Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain during their match at the Hopman Cup in Perth, Australia. Testud defeated Sanchez-Vicario 6-1, 6-3 (AP photo)



Carlos Moya of Spain slumps against a court side wall as he waits for French opponent Guillaume Raoux replace a broken shoe lace during their match at the Hopman Cup in Perth, Australia, Monday. Moya defeated Raoux, winning the match 7-6, 2-6, 6-3 (AP photo)



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain in action against opponent Sandrine Testud of France. Sanchez-Vicario lost the match to Testud 1-6, 3-6 (AP photo)

## Kuerten wins in Australian hardcourts

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten defeated Frenchman Jerome Golmard 7-5, 6-1 in a quick opening round match at the Australian Open's hardcourt championships here Monday.

The third seed former French Open champion broke Golmard's serve to take the tight first set then streaked away, winning five straight games to take the second set with a sizzling display of aces.

Australian Michael Tehrani made it through to the second round by beating Canadian Sebastian Lareau 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.

Scott Draper fought back to win through to the second round by beating American Justin Gimelstoh 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-3.

In his first tournament following a three-month lay-off since the U.S. Open, Draper struggled and showed signs of frustration, breaking a racket at one point.

But Draper said the right knee injury that troubled him throughout 1998 was no longer a problem and every match he could fit in now was a bonus' ahead of the Australian Open.

Romania's Roxandra Dragomir won her first match, beating Ukrainian Elena Tayarkova 6-1, 6-3.

Wang Shi-ting of Taiwan overcame Sylvia Plischke of Austria 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) and

## Krajicek presses for details of Korda dope test

SYDNEY (AFP) — Former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek on Monday called on his fellow players to demand details of why Petr Korda escaped suspension for taking steroids.

Krajicek called on the International Tennis Federation to fully explain its lenient stance after the 30-year-old Australian Open champion failed a drug test at Wimbleton last year.

"Now is the time for the players to start asking questions about what really happened," said Krajicek, the world No. 10 who is practising for next week's Sydney international.

"It's a very sensitive issue to talk about but I don't understand it.

"If he tested positive

maybe he must have done it but maybe there must be another side to the story.

"Either you test positive or you don't and people should know exactly what went on."

"If the ITF really did make some kind of mistake with the test it's very bad for Petr because now he's got the name and it's going to be very tough to shake it off."

Korda intends to defend his Australian Open title this month despite the announcement of the positive test for the banned steroid Nandrolone.

Most major sports ban first-time steroid offenders for two years. The ITF, which runs the four grand slams, has provision for a maximum one-year suspension.

"But the ITF merely took away Korda's Wimbleton

prizemoney and 199 computer ranking points at a meeting on December 22.

Korda has said he will now shelve his retirement plans because of the scandal. He is defending his Qatar Open title in Doha this week.

"I'll prove myself as a player here at Doha. I am determined to climb back up the world rankings. I intend to quit in around two years," he said last week.

"I have been proved innocent by the ITF and the decision will be announced shortly."

The ITF has also been criticised for keeping Korda's positive test quiet until the punishment was decided by its independent appeal committee last month.

## Sugiyama wins tense opener to Australian women's hardcourts

HOPE ISLAND, Australia (AFP) — Defending champion Ai Sugiyama of Japan won a tense three-set match against American Corina Morariu to reach the second round of the Australian women's hardcourt championships here Monday.

The fourth seed and World No. 18, who was runner-up in 1997 and winner last year, beat Morariu 6-2, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3.

In his first tournament following a three-month lay-off since the U.S. Open, Draper struggled and showed signs of frustration, breaking a racket at one point.

But Draper said the right knee injury that troubled him throughout 1998 was no longer a problem and every match he could fit in now was a bonus' ahead of the Australian Open.

She now plays Sarah Pitkowi of France who made fewer mistakes to beat erratic Australian Alicia Molik 6-3, 6-2.

Ranked seven in the world, the Frenchwoman won four titles in 1998 and reached the quarter-finals of the Australian Open which she won in 1995 for her only grand slam title.

A good year on and off the court, including her engagement to U.S. Major League baseball Roberto Alomar, has Pierce looking forward to 1999.

"I had good year in all seasons and I think I'm maturing as a person and as a player," Pierce said.

Important to Pierce is a good showing in the Australian Open in Melbourne.

"From my own standpoint it's always been an important tournament for me," Pierce said.

"All grand slams are important and when I won in 95 that was the most memorable moment of my career and I feel very comfortable playing there."

## Young and 49ers snap Packer jinx in spectacular style

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — Steve Young and the San Francisco 49ers ended their American football frustration against Green Bay in an amazing fashion here Sunday with receiver Terrell Owens going from goat to hero.

Owens caught a 25-yard touchdown pass from Young with three seconds remaining to give the 49ers a 30-27 first-round National Football League playoff victory over the Packers.

Second-year receiver Owens found redemption in the end zone, clinging to the ball after being hit by two defenders after dropping four passes and losing a fumble earlier in the game.

"I started out with a fumble and dropping a few passes. It was a tough day," Owens said. "Everybody stayed with me. They told me to shake it off. I knew somebody was going to have to make a big play."

Steve Young gave me a chance and the Lord gave it to me."

Young was winless in eight career games against Green Bay, which had knocked the 49ers out of the playoffs the past three seasons and won five in a row over San Francisco.

The 49ers advanced to an NFL quarter-final game Saturday at Atlanta. That winner will face the survivor of next Sunday's game between Arizona and Minnesota for a berth in the Super Bowl January 31 at Miami.

On the winning drive, Young ridged the same Packers defence that

sacked him a career-high nine times on November 1 in a 36-22 loss. Young completed 7 of 9 passes for 76 yards in 1:53, then jumped for joy.

Owens, mobbed by his teammates, was in tears on the sidelines.

"When he made that catch, he almost lost control of his emotions," 49ers coach Steve Mariucci said. "He was frustrated because he dropped a couple passes. I told him to have a short memory, forget it."

Also in tears was Green Bay defender Reggie White, who walked off the field for the final time into retirement. "Sorry we weren't able to do it for you," White told Packers fans.

A season marrred by officiating errors continued when television replay showed 49er receiver Jerry Rice fumbled on a play when referee ruled him down, sustaining San Francisco's drive for the winning points.

The Packers moved ahead 27-23 with 1:56 to play when Brett Favre completed a 15-yard touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman.

Favre hurled a 47-yard completion to rookie Corey Bradford and Dorsey Levens followed with a 15-yard third-down run to the 49ers' 15-yard line to spark Green Bay's 89-yard march.

Wade Richey's third field goal of the game, a 40-yard kick, had given San Francisco a 23-20 lead with 6:13 to play.

Richey's career-longest 48-yard

field goal had given the 49ers a 17-17 lead 12:48 into the third quarter but Ryan Longwell pulled the Packers even with 11:50 to go with a 37-yard field goal.

Young had equalised at 17-17 for

San Francisco six minutes into the second half on his second touchdown pass of the game to Greg Clark, this one an 8-yard effort.

Dorsey Levens scored on a two-

yard run with 31 seconds remaining to give the 49ers a 17-10 half-time lead.

The Packers' first touchback came on Brett Favre's two-yard toss to Antonio Freeman on the first play of the second quarter, giving Green Bay a 10-7 lead before Richey's 34-yard field goal equalised for the 49ers.

San Francisco had taken a 7-3 lead on Clark's one-yard touchdown catch from Young after Green Bay scored first on Longwell's 23-yard field goal.

The 49ers had signed retired defensive end Charles Haley to boost their pass rush. Haley, 34, is the only player in NFL history to play on five Super Bowl champions. He retired two years ago with back pain.

**TODAY AT**

CINEMA TEL: 463-4144

**PHILADELPHIA '1'**

Michael Douglas & Sean Penn .. in THE GAME

Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 463-4144

**PHILADELPHIA '2'**

Bruce Willis & Richard Gere .. in THE JACKAL

Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 569-238

**PLAZA**

Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 567-7420

**CONCORDE**

Jim Corrie.. in LIAR... LIAR Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:15, 8:15. Al Pacino & Robert De Niro. in HEAT Adel Imam .. in RISALA ILAI WALI

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 593-4793

**GALLERIA 1**

ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Sharon Stone & Dustin Hoffman .. in SPHERE

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 593-4793

**GALLERIA 2**

ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Helena Bonham & Linus Roache .. in WINGS OF THE DOVE

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Hisham Yunes TEL: 4635155

**Watch out for the new play**

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

## LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

Football association  
to distribute JD100,000

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) is expected to distribute JD100,000 to the Premier League's clubs within the coming few weeks. The JFA will also soon finalise a deal for next season with the consortium in charge of marketing the league. The two sides faced a controversial situation when the federation cancelled the 1998 league with five weeks remaining following a controversial call by the referee which led to a boycott by the clubs.

## Maintenance to start

## at Amman stadium

AMMAN — The Amman International Stadium is expected to close down in order to get it ready for the Aug. 15-31, 1999 Pan-Arab Games. Al Hussein Youth City Director Abdul Ghani Tabatabai said the Games committee in charge of construction will soon start maintenance work on the city's facilities. He added that the procedures include replacing the stadium's lawn, maintaining the drainage system, upgrading audio-visual transmission and constructing a car park with a capacity for 1,800 vehicles.

## Karate teams to have joint

## camp with Greeks

AMMAN — The Jordan Karate Federation has decided to host the Greek men's and women's teams in February. They are expected to hold a joint training camp and friendly matches with Jordan's national teams.

Committee to evaluate Asian  
Games results

AMMAN — Ministry of Culture and Youth Secretary-General Thouqan Obeidat Tuesday heads the first meeting of a committee in charge of re-evaluating Jordan's participation in the Asian Games, which were held in Bangkok Dec. 6-20. The committee is expected to submit its recommendations to Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sata'an Al Hassan to review them with the Jordanian Olympic Committee.



German driver Jutta Kleinschmidt and co-driver Tina Thorner from Sweden drive their Mitsubishi Pajero during the third stage of the Granada-Dakar rally between Agadir and Tan-Tan, Morocco. The team leads the race in their category (AP photo)

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

## Suker may join Panathinaikos

MADRID (AFP) — Croatian World Cup star Davor Suker — unsettled at Real Madrid — could be on his way to Greek club Panathinaikos, according to Spanish media reports on Monday. Panathinaikos have offered \$6.3 million for Suker, who was the leading scorer at the 1998 World Cup finals in France, the sports newspaper Marca reported.

## Vierkau wants to quit Tenerife

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Dutch international defender Ferdy Vierkau said Monday that he wants to quit Spanish first division strugglers Tenerife after a financial row that has lasted several months. "We are already actively seeking another club for Ferdy," the player's agent, Heule van Ginkel, said. Vierkau returned to Holland at the weekend after failing to reach agreement with Tenerife. The 25-year-old defender has played eight internationals for Holland and joined Tenerife in 1997 from Vitesse Arnhem.

## British close on Argentine crew in yacht race

MELBOURNE (AFP) — British sailors Richard Elphinstone and Thomas Makey scored their second win of the International Cadet World yachting Championships here Monday. Elphinstone and Makey led all the way in the light 10-knot south-easterly breeze to win heat four of the 10 race series in the only class raced Monday. The British crew won comfortably from Argentinians Juan Lupo and Ayelán Gabin and another British crew of Sam Carter and Rich Harding. With 1st, 11th, 5th and 1st placings, Elphinstone and Makey totalled 18 points, four behind leaders Gonzalo Politzer and Martín Manrique of Argentina who finished 10th on Monday after their 2-1-1 start to the championships.

## World championship sailors set course for Olympics

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Olympic qualifying places will be the goal for 2,000 sailors from 60 countries competing in 16 classes at the world yachting championships starting here Monday. Yachtsmen are competing in seven Olympic classes of Soling, 49ers, Finn, Laser, Europe women, 470 men and 470 women. The Finn division represents one of the toughest competitions in the championships with the Atlanta gold medalist Poland's Mateusz Kusnierek and Belgium's silver medalist Sébastien Godfroid both racing. Kusnierek won the Australian championships which finished here last week. In the women's 470 class Ukrainian pair Ruslana Taras and Elena Pakholchuk are chasing their third world championship in as many years. In the 90-woman Europe fleet, Dutchwoman Carolijn (Carolin) Brouwer, the 1998 world champion, has been in terrific form winning the Sydney International Regatta last month.

# Participating countries, marketing agreements to be finalised this week

## Iraqi confirmation brings number of competing countries to 12

By Aleen Bannayan

AMMAN — Officials hope the number of countries taking part in next summer's Pan-Arab Games as well as agreements regarding marketing and television coverage rights will be finalised within the coming week.

Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice-President Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz said Dec. 31 was earlier set as the final date for confirming participation but many countries had not yet done so.

Iraq and Qatar Monday confirmed participation bringing the number of countries taking part to 12.

Iraq notified the organising committee that a 400-strong delegation would take part in 24 sports.

Fawwaz said the organising committee was still awaiting word from the countries to finalise the list of events in the two-week tournament.

"We will know that within the coming week. It is of utmost importance to have the final number of teams and events for the success of all organisational aspects," Fawwaz Monday told the Jordan Times.

He said that the preliminary number of 27 events was very high and expected it to drop. The Beirut Games had 19 countries taking part in 20 sports events.

"Any event with less than five countries taking part will be cancelled. That will also make it easier for TV coverage and other aspects in the daunting task of organising such a

mega event," Fawwaz added.

Insiders said the late confirmation by some countries is probably affected by varied reasons; athletes from North African countries might have reservations about taking part in the Games which coincides with other international events such as the African Tournaments and the World Athletics Championships. Officials expected the strain between Gulf countries and Iraq to also affect the Games.

The JOC official said the Saudi firm, RAF, was most likely to win the marketing rights with \$1.5 million paid to Jordan in addition to 70 per cent of any additional income.

Television coverage rights had also not been finalised, with recent reports estimating that JTV needed JD6 million to be able to acquire equipment and manpower to cover the event properly.

Fawwaz noted that the construction of facilities was going ahead as planned with 25 sport facilities, including three sport cities, having been finalised to host the Games which will include 27 events for men and 19 for women.

As for the technical aspect of preparing Jordan's teams Fawwaz noted that only a few federations were adopting a carefully thought out strategy and were preparing their teams in a serious manner.

"Most federations, apart from handball, volleyball, and taekwondo have not shown a serious attitude in dealing

with the challenge. We should move fast to remedy this situation," Fawwaz noted.

He said that a committee charged with assessing Jordan's recent participation in the 13th Asian Games would meet Tuesday and discuss recent results to chart out a new plan for the federations.

Jordan only managed five medals, four by taekwondo, in the event. Most athletes failed to even match their own record set in the country.

Fawwaz warned of a wide gap between sports federations and athletes which led to the dismal Jordanian showing at the Asian Games.

With many officials and insiders calling for an immediate change in the sports federations which should have taken place in September, the ministry has so far not taken that step. Informed sources also suggest that change would affect only four out of over 20 federations, and surprisingly exclude federations whose athletes produced below par results.

After a recent visit to Amman, the Arab Ministerial Committee examining Jordan's preparations for the Games underlined their support for the Amman Games, saying that they would recommend to the Arab League that Jordan receives additional funding and assistance.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming Games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Sports

Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities.

Aid from the Arab League has been raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1 million instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through lowering the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

The Jordanian government has earmarked JD18 million for the event including the construction of a multi-purpose indoor stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium, in addition to acquiring and upgrading facilities with electronic timing machines and other needs.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

### Seeds advance in Auckland

AUCKLAND (AP) — Austria's Barbara Schett swept past struggling German Elena Wagner 6-1, 6-0 to get past the first round for the first time in four appearances at the Auckland WTA tournament here Monday.

Second seed Silvia Farina of Italy, ranked 19th in the world, also enjoyed a useful workout against Germany's Andrea Glass 6-4, 7-5 to set up a second-round match against American Meghann Shaughnessy.

Shaughnessy beat Italy's Laura Golarska 6-1, 6-4. Eighth-seed Maria Alejandra Vento of Venezuela suffered an early scare when she lost the first set to Germany's Marlene Weingartner.

### Asian soccer chief blasts two-year World Cup plan

#### FIFA vice-president sees problems

LONDON (AFP) — FIFA vice-president David Will on Monday admitted that changing the World Cup to every two years would create "enormous problems," but insisted he would keep an open mind about the plan.

The proposal has been put forward by FIFA president Sepp Blatter, and Will, the British Football Association's representative on the world governing body, concedes the first he heard of the idea was in the media.

The Scot stressed he shared Blatter's desire to maintain international soccer's place in the spotlight and would be more than willing to discuss the matter at executive level.

But he intimated that, in his view, the tournament might be devalued by abandoning its present four-year cycle — echoing widespread fears that more might produce less.

Will said: "This has not as yet been discussed at executive meetings and members like myself are hearing it now for the first time, but we would not reject any suggestion out of hand."

"When an idea is proposed by the president of FIFA then it deserves a fair hearing as to its potential merits, but I have to say I can foresee enormous problems."

"There would be logistical concerns because of the sheer level of organisation required to prepare for and produce a successful World Cup tournament."

"There is also the manner of the confederations having their own competitions, notably the likes of the European Championships and the African Nations Cup."

But Will added he recognised Blatter's motive was to retain the status of the international game ahead of the burgeoning club tournaments spearheaded through the European Champions' League.

He explained: "For me the most important part of what Sepp Blatter said was his anxiety to preserve the national teams and that is a desire to share by the rest of us and gives us all anxiety."

"But I would say being every four years does without doubt give the World Cup its special quality and there would be the danger of a biennial event losing that."

frequently. With Japan and Korea co-hosting the 2002 World Cup finals, Velappan said this would be an experiment to assess the feasibility of the FIFA proposal.

"If this proves to be satisfactory, it is possible in the future for the World Cup to be hosted by more than one country. If this works out, then it may be feasible to hold the event every two years," he added.

The proposal needs to be looked at very deeply. A study should be undertaken in cooperation with all the confederations in FIFA in order to see if it's feasible," he added.

More co-hosting of World Cups could enable the tournament to be staged more

(KFA) official. Other KFA officials played down the report as Blatter's personal views.

The proposal was also greeted with scepticism in Japan.

"Personally speaking, it may be all but impossible in view of the crowded schedule of football events, including those at home," said Hiroshi Onozawa, public relations chief of the Japan Football Association.

South Korean football officials cast doubt on Blatter's proposal however.

"We are not totally opposed to his idea. But European teams may have difficulties because of their tight game schedule," said Ka Sam-Hyon, a senior Korean Football Association

believed Blatter's remarks were meant to be a message for Europe.

Blatter was quoted as saying: "I want World Cups every two years. National teams would thereby regain the status they deserve."

Blatter favours continental championships held in odd years with the leading sides

on each continent advancing to a World Cup to be held the following year, it said.

Blatter, who was elected FIFA president last June, said his proposals were a reaction to European media tycoons, including Italian Silvio Berlusconi, who are pressing for a super league of top European clubs.

#### Deluxe Furnished Apartment For Rent

- Two large bedrooms, sitting, dining, large salon, large kitchen, 2 verandas, solar heating, water cistern, telephone, separate central heating.
- Deluxe furnished villa.
- One bedroom studio furnished.

Call: 5346162

### Lecture at Rawdat Al-Ma'ref Schools & College

A lecture discussing the history and aspects of Mathematics in the real world will be held by Dr. Gover, a professor of Mathematics representing the University of Bradford, UK, one of the leading Northern Consortium Universities. It will take place in the central library of the college on Thursday the 7th of January from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Seating arrangements strictly by booking through the Public Relations office. Tel. 5528599 Ext. 18/30

### Interested In A British University Degree?

Rawdat Al-Ma'ref Schools and College welcomes Dr. Gover, a professor of Mathematics in one of the leading Northern Consortium Universities. The University of Bradford-England. Dr. Gover will give an open seminar discussing the Foundation Year at R.A.M.S and higher education in the United Kingdom. The seminar will be held for interested people who would like to know about the Foundation Year which is an opportunity for you to prepare for entry to a British University degree course, by taking a one-year Foundation course in Al-Ma'ref Schools and College. This event will be held in the central library of the college on Wednesday the 6th of January at Seven P.M. Booking sets is strictly through the Public Relations Office Tel. 5528599 Ext. 18 / 30

## Israel moves ahead with law against return of Golan, Arab east Jerusalem

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli parliament adopted in a first reading Monday a law toughening the conditions for any return of the Golan Heights to Syria or the handing over of Arab east Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

Deputies in the 120-member Knesset voted 55 to 35 with 18 abstentions to approve the bill, which would require that any territorial concessions on the Golan or Arab east Jerusalem be approved by at least 61 members of parliament as well as in a national referendum.

The current law allows territorial concessions of annexed territory to be adopted by a relative majority in parliament.

The bill must now be considered by the Knesset law committee and be approved in a second and third reading by the full parliament to become law.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and annexed the strategic plateau in December 1981.

More than 13,000 Israeli settlers live in the Golan as well as some 17,000 Druze, most of whom remain loyal to former Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Syria is demanding the return of the whole of the Golan in exchange for a peace treaty.

Israel's former Labour-led government agreed to the principle of exchanging Golan territory for peace, but negotiations between the two sides were suspended in February 1996.

Since the nationalist right came to power in May 1996 elections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to resume the negotiations where they left off, insisting

all future talks be held without any preconditions.

Following the vote, Labour whip Elie Goldschmidt said some of his party's members backed the bill because it was in line with the policies of slain former Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"I am in favour of the bill because it does not rule out a withdrawal from the Golan but only says such a decision must be approved by a referendum, and Rabin himself backed this," Goldschmidt told AFP.

But the leftist Meretz party strongly opposed the measure and accused the Labour Party of "political schizophrenia."

"Rabin was ready to give up the Golan and now they are backing a law that aims to prevent any pullback," Meretz deputy Haim Oron said.

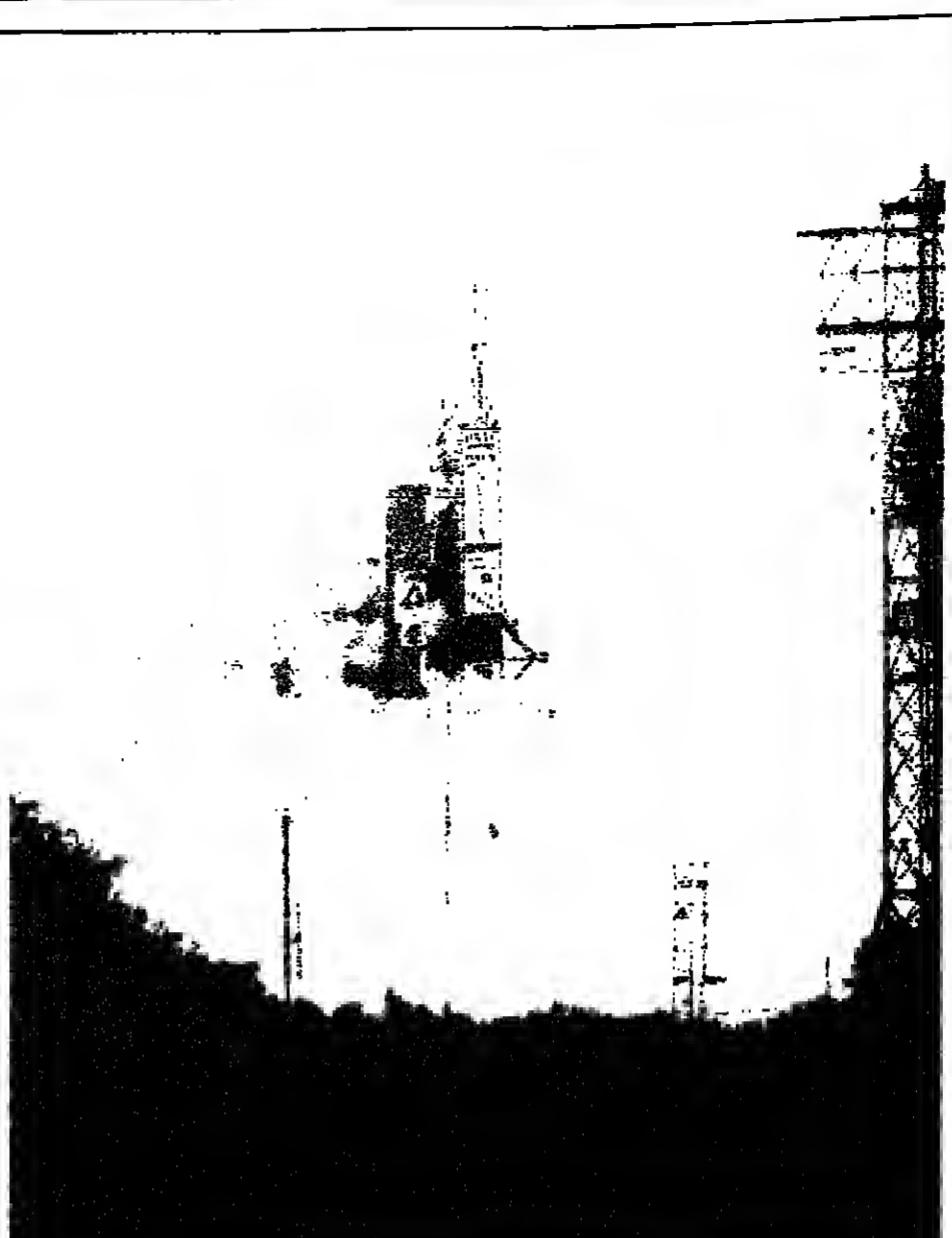
After the Knesset gave pre-

liminary approval to the Golan bill in July, an official Syrian newspaper described the decision as a "declaration of war" and a "direct challenge to the whole international community and the United Nations."

Israel also occupied Arab east Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and quickly annexed the sector as part of its "eternal capital."

The Palestinians hope to make Arab east Jerusalem, home to some 200,000 Arabs and around 160,000 Jewish settlers, the capital of an independent Palestinian state in the future.

Under the Oslo peace accords, the future of the city is to be negotiated between the two sides although all Israel's main political parties oppose any loss of sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem.



A Delta 2 launch vehicle takes off on Sunday from launch pad 17-B at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station carrying NASA's Mars Polar Lander spacecraft and Deep Space 2 spacecraft to begin an eleven-month journey to Mars. The mission will land near the Martian South Pole digging soil samples while gathering other data and transmitting the information back to Earth (AFP photo)

## Iraqi leadership holds military talks

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein headed a meeting of the country's leadership Monday for talks on the army's status after U.S. and British missiles, the official INA news agency said.

The meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and ruling Baath party officials followed a cabinet meeting Sunday during which Saddam vowed to resist the Western allies' patrol of "no-fly" zones.

The commander of the northern zone, Ezzat Ibrahim, and southern zone, General Ali Hassan Al Majid, both stated "the determination of the people and armed forces to sacrifice themselves and fight the enemy aggression," INA said.

## Netanyahu faces possible challenge from mentor

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a potential threat to his leadership from a former political mentor on Monday as Israel's parliament prepared to give final approval to a May 17 election date.

Former Foreign and Defence Minister Moshe Arens, who brought Netanyahu into public life in the early 1980s, said the Likud leader was responsible for defections by top lawmakers that had weakened the right-wing party.

"In the last few days several people from Likud have appealed to me, saying I'm the person who can rehabilitate the party and can lead it to victory," Arens, 73, told Israel Radio.

"It turns out that's the overwhelming opinion, I'll have to make a decision," said Arens, who has until Sunday to decide whether to run for the party leadership.

Six candidates have already said they will challenge Netanyahu in the May 17 poll, including two Likud defectors who have formed their own parties. Likud lawmaker Uzi Landau and a cabinet colleague, Rafael Eitan of the Tsomet party.

Israel's parliament planned to give final approval on Monday to a bill bringing forward elections from late 2000 to next May.

The bill tentatively cleared parliament last month after divisions emerged in Netanyahu's rightist coalition over the U.S.-brokered Wye River land-for-security peace agreement signed with the Palestinians in October.

A final vote was expected at 1500 GMT.

Coalition hardliners oppose the Wye deal which cleared parliament with the support of the opposition Labour Party.

Labour cancelled the "safety net" it had provided the government when Netanyahu froze implementation of the agreement last month over alleged Palestinian violations.

Netanyahu has since trailed Labour Party chief Ehud Barak in opinion polls.

The latest survey published in the Maariv newspaper on Monday showed Barak would get 51 per cent of the vote compared with 41 per cent for Netanyahu if elections were held this week. Retired army chief Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, a political novice forming a new centrist party, would defeat Netanyahu by nearly 20 percentage points according to the poll.

Netanyahu was due to spell out his political plans at a Wednesday news conference.

(Continued from page 1)

After the invasion, which split the Arab World into pro- and anti-Iraqi camps, the Arab Gulf state downgraded ties with Amman, keeping a chargé d'affaires to run its mission, cut economic aid to the Kingdom and expelled tens of thousands of Jordanian workers — many of Palestinian origin.

Sheikh Sabah was quoted by news agencies as responding to a question concerning the reopening of the Jordanian embassy in Kuwait, by saying: "When he [Khatib] comes to Kuwait, everything will be over."

Kuwait turned down several overtures after 1991 to mend ties, mainly because of a strong popular anti-Jordanian sentiment especially among members of parliament.

But relations began warming up gradually when Jordan began to distance itself from Baghdad, especially after sheltering two top Iraqi defectors in August 1995.

"It seems that they [the Kuwaitis] are ready to resume contacts with Jordan now as local considerations appear to have eased," one Jordanian official told the Jordan Times.

"But Sheikh Sabah's visit to His Majesty in Washington, was considered as an excellent gesture and a step forward," he added.

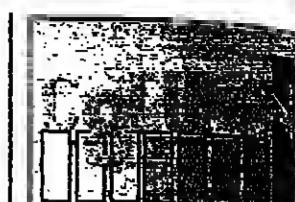
Kuwait, which resumed direct flights to Amman for the first time since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in July 1990, has steadily expanded bilateral business ties with Jordan. Kuwaiti investment in the banking and hotel industry is also up, businessmen said.

Amman has also seen the number of Kuwaiti tourists and visitors who spend their holidays in the Kingdom rising sharply.

In June, former planning minister Rima Khalaf became the first cabinet member to visit Kuwait at the invitation of a Kuwaiti-based Arab economic institution.

Jordan has since 1991 restored ties with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait's partners in the six-nation GCC.

Oman is the only GCC member whose ties with Jordan were not harmed by the Gulf crisis. "Our relations with the five GCC countries are very normal and good in all aspects," Khatib said. "But still I believe that there is room to improve and expand relations between us all," he added.



'Dead' Romanian returns to life for the New Year

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Leon Iani, a 25-year-old Romanian declared dead from alcoholic poisoning and taken to the morgue on New Year's Eve made a miraculous recovery and a few hours later was seen in 1999 with his family, a police source said Monday. The body was quickly moved to the town morgue. But it seemed that news of his death had been greatly exaggerated. A doctor who came to perform an autopsy four hours later accompanied by a policeman was only able to verify that the body had disappeared, a local police source said. Puzzled police went to his home to find his family tossing the return of the departed.

## Sacked German pastor opens strip club

ARZBERG (AFP) — A German pastor, thrown out of the church after inviting strippers to enliven one of his speeches, has set up his own strip club, the popular daily Bild reported Monday. Wolfgang Triebel, 42, called in two strippers during an election speech while bidding to become mayor of Arzberg in October, the newspaper reported. His actions infuriated the church and outraged several members of his audience, which included children. Out of a job, the father-of-four decided to set up his own strip club, the Don Carrillo dance club, offering shows at \$200.

"I needed a job," he said.

## Europhiles go ape in French zoo

PARIS (AFP) — A new-born gorilla at a French zoo has fallen victim to the frenzy surrounding the launch of the new European currency. Zoo keepers have named the baby Euro. "The name came naturally considering when it was born," said Pierre Thivierge, director of the zoo at Saint-Martin-La-Plaine. The little ape was born overnight Sunday to parents Yasmin and Tam Tam. Euro is the couple's third child after Baby and Atanga. Zoo officials have so far not determined Euro's sex as they have been unable to approach the mother.

## At meet renews

By Caroline Faraj

PARIS (AP) — A new-born gorilla at a French zoo has fallen victim to the frenzy surrounding the launch of the new European currency.

Zoo keepers have named the baby Euro. "The name came naturally considering when it was born," said Pierre Thivierge, director of the zoo at Saint-Martin-La-Plaine. The little ape was born overnight Sunday to parents Yasmin and Tam Tam. Euro is the couple's third child after Baby and Atanga. Zoo officials have so far not determined Euro's sex as they have been unable to approach the mother.

## Referee hit with a hot dog asks for protection

LONDON (R) — An English referee Paul Durkin was forced to ask for protection after being hit by a hot dog during an FA Cup match between Oldham Athletic and Chelsea. Durkin was standing near the goal-line when the ball hit him in the face. He was hit by the fast food after he allowed a Chelsea goal. He was in the process of consoling the linesman when he was hit. He then disallowed the goal. A match steward said the missle was a pastry-covered sausage roll but Durkin said it was a frankfurter enclosed in a bread bun. Durkin was injured in the incident but he would include it in his match report. Police said the man was arrested. Chelsea won the match 2-0.

## Mexican royal bread to enter Guinness

MEXICO CITY (R) — More than 260,000 Mexican bakers packed the streets around the capital's historic centre, the Zocalo, for slices of a giant loaf of Christmas-season "royal bread." More than 2,000 bakers used tonnes of ingredients in a bid to get the 1.6-km loaf of traditional sweet bread into the Guinness Book of Records. Royal bread, a Roman Catholic tradition in Mexico going back more than 400 years, is used to mark Twelfth Night — Spanish, the Day of the Kings — when the Three Magi are considered to have presented their gifts to the baby Jesus.

The loaf, weighing 14 metric tonnes, is the largest ever made in Mexico. It is 10 times larger than the previous record holder, which was 150 kilograms.

Organizers of the event, which involved 1,000 volunteers, said the bread will be used to feed the poor and homeless in the capital.

By AP

## Israel to

NEW YORK (AP) — Israel has been invited to participate in the 1999 edition of the New York City Marathon, which is set for November 21.

The invitation was extended by the New York City Marathon Organizing Committee, which said Israel's participation would be a "symbolic gesture of peace and friendship."

The marathon, which attracts

## Two Israeli women injured in Hebron attack

(Continued from page 1)

mentation of the Wye River land-for-peace agreement.

Palestinian frustration has been heightened by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's apparent determination to keep the peace accord on ice and continue expanding Jewish settlements in the run-up to early Israeli elections in May.

Netanyahu has justified his suspension of the peace process by accusing the PNA

of failing to act against violent militants in areas under its control.

Netanyahu made no immediate comment on Monday's attack.

But Ehud Barak, the head of the opposition Labour Party and one of several centrists hoping to defeat Netanyahu in the May election, issued a statement calling on the PNA to catch the attackers and renew security cooperation with Israel.

Noam Arnon, a spokesman for the Hebron settlers, accused the army of failing to protect Israelis in the city, saying the "laxity of the authorities has allowed attackers to find refuge in the [Palestinian] autonomous areas."

"Thousands of Israeli vehicles use the road where the attack took place each day and they can't all be armoured to protect them from bullets," he said.

he said.

Transportation Minister Shaul Yaalon, a leader of the pro-settler National Religious Party, demanded that the army take back control over key areas overlooking the Jewish enclave in Hebron to protect the settlers from attack.

"The autonomous zones in Hebron have become a haven for Palestinian killers," he said on Israeli army radio.

By AP

## U.S.: Iraqi aircraft probe no-fly zones

(Continued from page 1)

said Sunday.

"Hussein and his government should understand that we will continue to enforce these no-fly zones vigorously," he added.

Saddam told his cabinet that Baghdad will resist the no-fly zones as a "violation of Iraq's sovereignty and air space," the official Iraqi INA news agency

Operation Northern Watch, which enforces a no-fly area above the 36th parallel in Iraq.

"We continue to enforce the no-fly zone," Stump said.

Citing operational security reasons, Stump refused to comment on whether the force, which includes British planes, flew on Monday.

More than 45 U.S. and

British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the Operation Northern Watch, which is based at the Incirlik air base near the southern Turkish city of Adana.

Meanwhile in New York, Western diplomats said Iraq on Monday notified the United Nations of its concern for the safety of British and U.S. humanitarian personnel, but refrained from ordering their expulsion.

The diplomats familiar with a two-paragraph note said that it expressed concern about Iraq's ability to guarantee the safety and security of British and U.S. aid workers in the country, following U.S. and British air strikes against Iraqi targets last month.

But the note does not explicitly suggest that any action should be taken in the light of the situation, the diplomats said.

## Israel officially heads into long election campaign

(Continued from page 1)

poll published Monday, the biggest threat to Netanyahu's re-election hopes will come from opposition

Labour Party leader Ehud Barak and a political newcomer, the centrist former army chief of staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

The Gallup poll showed that were the elections held today, Barak would beat Netanyahu in a head-to-head race by 51 per cent to 41 percent, while Lipkin-Shahak would triumph 54 to 36 per cent.

The early elections became inevitable after Netanyahu defied hardline nationalists in his own camp and signed the US-brokered Wye River land-

for-security agreement with the Palestinians in October.

The accord requires Israel to yield control over an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians, a move fiercely opposed by hardliners who formed the core of Netanyahu's constituency when he was elected in May 1996.

After ordering a first phase of pullbacks from two per cent of the West Bank in November, Netanyahu froze further application of the Wye accords, accusing the Palestinian side of failing to honour its security commit-

ments under the deal.

Despite objections from both the Palestinians and the United States there appears to be little likelihood Netanyahu will move ahead with the agreement during the election campaign.

In numerous speeches over the past two months Netanyahu has said a cornerstone of his campaign will be allegations that the Palestinians are not trustworthy and that only a tough nationalist government can defend Israel's vital interests in difficult negotiations on a permanent peace settlement.



Faithful thieves rob Russian church

MOSCOW (AP) — Thieves robbed one of Russia's oldest and most famous churches, taking icons, crosses and other objects, an Orthodox Church spokesman said Sunday. The robbers took two icons, gold and silver chains, small crosses and medallions on Sunday night from the Church of the Intercession on the River Nerl,